THE EXAMINER.

ESTABLISHED 1808.

An Independent Weekly Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art.

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If I might give a short hint to an impartial writer it would be to tell him his fate. If he resolves to venture upon the dangerous precipice of telling unbiassed truth, let him proclaim war with mankind—neither to give nor to take quarter. If he tells the crimes of great men, they fall upon him with the iron hands of the law; if he tells them of virtues, when they have any, then the mob attacks him with slander. But if he regards truth, let him expect martyrdom on both sides, and then he may go on fearless.—DE FOE.

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NOTICE.

We have the pleasure of informing our readers and the general public that on the 4th of January, 1879, *The Examiner*, which enters on its *seventy-first* year, will revert to its original shape. Arrangements have been made for an entirely new fount of clearly-cut type, and the paper will be of the best quality, slightly toned. The services of some of the most distinguished writers have been secured, and a thoroughly Independent line, free from any party bias, will be steadily pursued. Notices of *Finance*, *Theatres*, *Music*, and *Art* will be continued, without curtailing the space reserved for *Reviews* of all important publications. Special attention will be devoted to *Education*, and a series of articles on *The Public Schools of England* is in preparation. Information and letters from influential persons abroad, of which the value has been amply proved by the events of the past two months, will continue to form a prominent feature in the paper.

While strictly avoiding the lines of the "Society" journals, *The Examiner* will not shrink from fearlessly exposing all abuses of a public nature, and will endeavour to act up to its original motto:

"Party is the madness of many for the gain of a few."

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS.

Advertisements intended for insertion in next week's *Examiner* should reach the Office not later than noon on Friday.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL.

THE QUEEN'S MESSENGER.

The Czar's Aide-de-Camp, General Leveschoff, has arrived in London from St. Petersburg, having taken Berlin on his way. He is the bearer of a despatch of the highest importance, referring, as it does, to the nomination of the future Prince of Bulgaria. It appears that the Emperor has given most peremptory orders to the Governor-General of Bulgaria, Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff, to decline any offers he may receive from the notables. The chances of Prince Louis of Battenberg are thus greatly increased. At present, this Prince is serving in the English navy. His father, Prince Alexander of Hesse, is an Austrian cavalry general, and honorary colonel of the 8th Austrian Dragoons and 8th Russian Hussars. The sister of Prince Alexander is Empress of Russia, one of his cousins is the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt (husband of the late Princess Alice), and another has just married Princess Elizabeth of Prussia. Thus this candidate for the Bulgarian Throne is the blood relation of the reigning families of the most important Great Powers; and it is confidently hoped that he will be received by the rest as a *persona gratissima*.

There is much agitation just now at Berlin on account of the question of the succession to the Duchy of Brunswick; for, though Duke William is in good health, he is about seventy-three years of age. The Brunswickers are in great fear of being annexed to Prussia; and it is asserted that the commandant of the fortress of Magdeburg has received orders

to occupy the Duchy in the name of Prussia immediately upon the decease of the Duke. It is feared that the Duke of Cumberland cannot in any case succeed, for, as Duke of Brunswick, he would be a prince of the German Empire, against the existence of which he has already protested, and still continues to protest.

The construction of the new fortifications at Erzeroum is, we are informed, being vigorously pushed on, under the direction of British officers, the chief of whom has made himself a name by his valuable reports on the operations of the Turkish army in Asia, to which he was attached.

The Empress of Russia is doing her utmost to prevent the evacuation of East Roumelia being carried out.

It is stated that, as soon as General Krijanovsky succeeds General Kaufmann in the Governorship of Turkestan, Central Asia will be thrown open by the Russian authorities to Europeans, and the present prohibition against Englishmen passing beyond Orenburg will be removed.

It is strongly rumoured in Russian official circles that one of the groups in Polynesia will shortly be occupied by Russia as a cruiser station for the Pacific.

Prince Nikita of Montenegro has addressed a note to the Porte in which it is stated that the Montenegrin Government cannot consider itself at peace with Turkey so long as the conditions laid down in the Treaty of Berlin are not carried out by the latter. The present condition of affairs, the Note says, is equivalent to a truce only, and, unless the Porte speedily proves its honest intention to carry out the Berlin stipulations, Montenegro will be obliged to appeal to arms to enforce them.

The Russian Government contemplates making the island of Saghalien the future place of deportation for Nihilist offenders.

The Holy See has been in the habit of protesting against the occupation of Rome by the Italian troops whenever a Consistory has taken place. The question is now being debated at Rome whether this protest should be repeated on the occasion of the Consistory which is to meet early next year. Leo XIII. is in favour of abandoning the custom as useless; many of the Cardinals, however, wish to preserve it.

We are informed that the Russian Government contemplates extending the authority of the Emir of Bokhara over certain portions of the Pamir tableland abutting upon the Hindoo Koosh and contiguous to Cashmere.

We are informed that before resigning Signor Cairoli begged the King of Italy to grant Passanante his life, and that His Majesty promised to consider the request carefully.

We hear that General Lomakin is organising a considerable force of cavalry from among the friendly Yomood Turcomans, and that the regiments, as soon as armed and equipped, will be sent forward for ulterior operations beyond Merve.

The Khedive has expressed his desire to appoint several English officers to important posts in his army. It is at present uncertain whether His Highness's request will be granted.

It is reported from St. Petersburg that, in consequence of the recent demonstration of the students, General Obrutscheff will be the new War Minister, and General Schultz will take charge of the notorious third section (police).

The effective of the Russian army in Bulgaria is now 200,000 men and 900 guns.

We are informed that elaborate designs are in progress at the Russian Etat-Major for converting Widdin next spring into a first-class fortress, armed with Krupp guns of the largest calibre.

We hear that General Stolietoff has been removed from the Turkestan army and appointed to the Staff at St. Petersburg. It is understood that the late envoy at Cabul will shortly receive a prominent command in South Russia.

The actual assassin of Prince Mezentsoff is believed by the Russian secret police to have sought a refuge in England.

Leo XIII. has, we are informed, decided to take energetic measures in order to prevent the Society of Jesus from interfering in ecclesiastical matters in Belgium and France. Instructions have been sent to the apostolic nuncios on this subject.

The new pamphlet about to be published by Count Harry Arnim on the conflict between the Vatican and the German Empire, entitled "*Quid faciamus nos?*" is asserted to have been written at the instigation of the Bishop of Agram Mgr. Strossmayer, who, having just returned from Rome, has taken the opportunity of communicating to Count Arnim the bases of an understanding which would be accepted by the Holy See. If this version should turn out to be the correct one, the pamphlet of the ex-Ambassador would be nothing more than a *ballon d'essai* of the Roman Curia.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

During the present distress and want of work in the manufacturing districts, the *Sanitary Record* recalls to the attention of local authorities the fact that the Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act, passed in July 1863, was specially framed to meet the Lancashire distress; and under its provisions in Blackburn more than twenty of the new sewers, eight and three-quarter miles of new streets, besides

river and other improvements, were carried out. It was Mr. Robert Rawlinson, C.B., chief engineer of the Local Government Board for Lancashire, who worked out practically the great scheme of public works in that county by which in Blackburn alone 15,000 hands out of work were provided with employment.

There is great excitement in Vienna on the subject of the dissolution by Government of the *Academischer Leseverein*, a club composed of the professors, students, and past students, of the Vienna University, who belong to the German province of Austria. Last week a member of the Austrian Parliament, Ritter von Schönerer, stated that the German provinces of Austria were anxious to be annexed to the German Empire. This remark raised a storm of opposition, and a few days afterwards the President read out to the House a number of letters and telegrams from Schönerer's constituents, in which the statement made by their member was flatly contradicted. On this Schönerer asserted that he had received a number of letters approving his speech, and, when several members expressed their disbelief in his words, he challenged the doubters to meet him "outside the house." But, as civilians in Austria do not at all like fighting, no one took any notice of the challenge. However, the University Club, of which Schönerer was a most active member, has been dissolved on account of its alleged "anti-patriotic tendencies." The *Neue Freie Presse* remarks that these anti-patriotic tendencies would, but for Schönerer's speech, probably never have been discovered, and points out that patriotism in the Austro-Hungarian Empire is a quality which it is difficult to possess. There are many who love Austria, and are Austrian patriots; there are also plenty of Hungarian patriots, but it is not easy to imagine a Dual Austro-Hungarian patriot, loyal to, and enthusiastic for, both Parliaments and their joint Delegations.

Schönerer's conduct having been, by Imperial order, placed before the Herald's College, that institution has declared that he is unworthy of the title of Knight (*Ritter*), and he will probably be degraded by the Emperor.

That the occupation of Bosnia has caused a considerable amount of discontent among the German Austrians is undeniable. There is in Bosnia a large Slavonic population, which will sooner or later have a just claim to be represented in the Reichsrath, and, now that the Czechs have decided to abandon their old policy of passive resistance, it is probable that the Slavonic deputies of Bosnia will, together with those of the other territorities under the rule of the Cisleithan Government, form a majority which will oust the German element from the predominant position it has hitherto occupied. But even if this should be the case, the Austrian Germans would be far better off, both from a material and a moral point of view, than if they were ruled from Berlin. In Austria they would still play a leading part as the most wealthy and cultivated section of the population, while in Germany they would form a mere province, and Vienna, the "Kaiserstadt" of which they are so proud, would sink to the level of Hanover or Darmstadt. Another strong obstacle to any separatist tendencies among the German Austrians is their strong feeling of loyalty to the Emperor Francis Joseph; and the civil and religious freedom which they enjoy under their present constitution can hardly dispose them to exchange their present liberties for a system of press prosecutions and Falck laws. Moreover, even if they offered to join the German Empire, it is more than doubtful whether Prince Bismarck would accept the offer. Setting aside the danger of immensely strengthening his Ultramontane opponents by the addition of 9,000,000 Austrian Catholics to the German Empire, he would certainly hesitate to take a step of which the first consequence would be the disruption of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and the second the exposure of the southern and eastern frontiers of Germany to the attacks of Russia. Notwithstanding the friendship which at present unites their rulers, there are no two nations—not even the Germans and the French—who are so antagonistic to each other in character, material interests, and political tendencies, as the Germans and the Russians; and Prince Bismarck is too sagacious a statesman to sacrifice Germany's strongest bulwark in the Russo-German war of the future to a sentimental desire for the completion of German unity.

The distress throughout the length and breadth of the land is assuming grave proportions. From all sides reports are coming in of fresh furnaces blown out, fresh hands out of employ. All classes are affected, from the day labourer to the skilled artisan, and local boards are powerless to alleviate the dire poverty which prevails in every district. Without for one moment denying the right of masters to throw their hands out of employ, we would impress most strongly upon all in the position of employers the fearful responsibility they incur by closing the only means of sustenance to their workmen at a time when the iron hand of winter is upon them. Doubtless, there are cases where it has become imperative. No one can blame a master for refusing to work at a loss, but the common laws of humanity suggest any method other than the wholesale discharge of workmen. Five thousand artisans, employed by a great Company like the London and North-Western Railway at Crewe, are to "play" for ten days this Christmas, and all know the nature of the "play" and the stakes—a starving family against a company's gain, and the devil taking, in most cases, the odd trick. Reports also reach us of the closing of the works in the Barrow district, and of many furnaces blown out in South Staffordshire, one of which belongs to Lord Dudley. The reason in all cases assigned is the stereotpyed "depression of trade." Surely, such a man as Lord Dudley, and a flourishing Company like the London and North-Western Railway, might hold their hands for a little, and rather offer a reduction in wages than turn men out to starve. It may be urged that the men have brought it on themselves, and, by constant strikes and repeated refusals to accept a reduction, have made it incumbent on the masters to take the matter into their own hands. There is, we fear, much truth in this; and, if the men now refused a reduction, we could have no pity for them. But we ask that this offer should be made. While winter is upon as, and at this Christmas season, let it not be said that in the hour of their need the men were turned away from the door. A merciful system of give and take will endow more confidence, and do more to break the power of the "Arch" tempters, than any stern measures of retributive justice. Without entering on the subject of the value of unions, we sincerely hope the eyes of the working man will be opened to the true character of those wolves in sheeps' clothing whose occupation

consists in stumping the country in order to induce the hands to strike. These remarks, however, apply, we fear, but to a minority of the distressed. With frost comes the cessation of all agricultural and horticultural pursuits; and, as we have said, local boards are powerless. It, therefore, behoves the Government to establish relief works in every district where distress prevails. It has been found to answer in other countries; why not in England? Provided the men understood it to be a temporary measure, it would in no way interfere with the ultimate market value (if we may so call it) of their labour, we are persuaded that they would gladly work and earn a modest sum per diem if only to keep the wolf from the door; and we should be spared such senile resolutions as that of the Chesterfield Board of Guardians, who, on the representation of their parish surgeon, decided not to give relief to any person possessed of a dog!

The Central Panslavist Committee in Moscow is now establishing agencies in Bulgaria and Roumelia, and has despatched 100,000 roubles for the purpose of enabling these agencies to promote the Panslav agitation. It is very unlikely that the International Commission will ever succeed in its labours as long as Russia is permitted not only to employ all official means of preventing the execution of the Treaty of Berlin by delays and alleged difficulties, but also to raise new obstacles by these unofficial committees which notoriously caused the first rising in Bosnia and the Servian war. That the Panslavist agitation is not discouraged by the Government has been proved over and over again; that its committees abroad could instantly be dissolved and the intrigues stopped by the administrators of the occupied provinces is equally well-known. Meanwhile, the Central Committee is generally accused of huge frauds, which affect its finances to the extent of 130,000 roubles at least. This sum, which was intended for Bulgaria, is alleged to have been used by different members of the Committee for their own private purposes.

There are signs that the subject of river management—using the word in its most comprehensive sense—is likely before long to force itself upon the serious attention of Government and of the Houses of Parliament. A deputation, representing most of those counties, and some of those towns, through which our principal rivers run, attacked the Home Secretary a few days ago on the subject; and, although it elicited from that gentleman little more than the usual stereotyped reply, it said enough to convince the public, and perhaps to convince Mr. Cross himself, that the rivers cannot be left very much longer in their present deplorable condition of mismanagement. It ought not to be forgotten that the present Government came into office with a grand flourish of trumpets over the material benefits which it was about to confer on the people. We are not disposed to make light of what it has already done in this direction, or to charge it, as some members of the Opposition have rather rashly done, with having wholly falsified these promises. But it cannot be said that in this matter of river management there has been such a display of energy as might be expected from a Government burning to distinguish itself in the field of sanitary reform. The sanitary state of the Thames and of almost every other river in England is not one about which there can be any doubt. Committees and Commissions have investigated it, and have presented reports voluminous enough to frighten an inhabitant of Mount Ararat. The very name "prevention of floods" is suggestive of massive blue books, interminable engineers' reports, and protracted discussions before a whole world of boards, vestries, conservators, and sewage authorities. Moreover, it will be remembered that the very subject of river management has already been taken up by the Government in a public way. The County Boards Bill of last year contained a proposal with respect to it which was crude enough, it is true, and would have proved wholly unworkable in practice, but which shewed at least that the matter was deemed of primary importance. It was a scheme for placing the rivers under the management of the new provincial boards, whose multifarious duties were apparently to include a general supervision over the portions of river coming within their several jurisdictions. To show how impracticable would have been this method of dealing with the rivers, it will probably suffice merely to allude to a famous maxim usually quoted under the heading of *divisum imperium*. To cut up a river into detached pieces—like one of its own eels when handed over to a *chef*—and hand over each one of them to a different Board, having no connection, and, very possibly, no fellow feeling, with its next-door neighbour, would be a sufficiently unpromising measure. But, when it is observed that the several detached links would themselves often be subject to different jurisdictions—one extending over the right and the other over the left bank—the absurdity of the system is still more clearly displayed. The rivers, if they are to be dealt with in a fair and satisfactory way, must be subjected each to its own single authority; whose powers must extend at least to both sides of the channel, and to the main portion of the water upwards and downwards. Some of them are already subject to such a single authority; others are managed—or, more often, mismanaged—by several boards. But the conservators, or bodies of control, whatever they may be, are at present helpless and shiftless creatures, crippled for want of funds, often loaded with debt, always incompetent to raise sufficient revenues, or, indeed, to raise anything at all upon a fair and well-organised system. At the same time, there they are: and one of the questions which Lord Ripon, who headed the deputation to Mr. Cross, very pertinently asked and answered, was, "What is to be done with them?" It would be difficult, and often unjust, to supersede them altogether, inasmuch as hitherto they have wanted the power rather than the will to do any good. But it would not be impossible either to incorporate them into new Boards or to graft new Boards upon them; and their experience, such as it is, would be valuable—as a warning, if not as an example—to their successors or coadjutors. What the proper functions of the new bodies would be, and how they are to be enabled to perform them, are questions of rather more intricacy.

The Emperor William has been deeply affected by the sudden death of his reader and personal friend, M. Louis Schneider, the most powerful personage in the sovereign's *entourage*. M. Schneider, who had accompanied his Royal master in all his campaigns, was at the same time the confidential envoy of the Russian Government at the Court of Berlin. Not only did he influence the official press of Berlin in the direction desired by the Government of St. Petersburg, through letters dated from the capital of Russia, and, of course, containing unimpeach-

able information obtained from head-quarters, but he had the task of making daily reports from Berlin direct to the Czar's Cabinet on the acts and tendencies of the German Court, on the Emperor personally, and on the policy both home and foreign pursued by Herr Von Bismarck. These reports, which were written with the Emperor's consent, did not always agree with those sent by the official ambassador, M. d'Oubril. And it is also a well-established fact that Herr Von Bismarck had on various occasions rather violent scenes with M. Schneider on account of those private reports, which had more than once the effect of seriously annoying the Chancellor and of disturbing his political calculations.

The ostensibly peaceful attitude of the English Government is, we are assured, caused by the direct and personal intervention of the Emperor Alexander at the Court of St. James's. The Czar is getting used to this kind of work. It is well known in diplomatic circles that, about four weeks ago, His Majesty took a similar step with regard to the Emperor Francis Joseph. The Cabinet of Vienna had not concealed from the Russian Government that the attitude of their agents at Bucharest, Philippopolis, and Adrianople, had given rise to the idea that Russia did not intend to fulfil the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin, concerning the time fixed for the evacuation of the occupied provinces south of the Balkans; and it was also feared that Roumania was to be forced into granting Russia an *etappen* road either through the Dobrudsha or through the Principality itself. It was then that by the mouth of Count Schouvaloff the Emperor of Russia gave an assurance upon his word of honour (!!) that this mistrust was devoid of the slightest foundation. By this means the Emperor Francis Joseph found himself in a position to tranquillise the Cabinet of Bucharest, which had become quite hysterical on account of the projects unceasingly attributed to the Russian Government.

Our readers are aware that serious differences have arisen between the East Roumelian Financial Commission and Prince Dondukoff-Korsakoff. The Russian Governor is accused of having gone far beyond his authority in financial matters, and of having, in fact, alienated the revenues of the province. There seem to be good grounds for this charge. For it appears that there is a certain French lady called Madame B., living at Constantinople, who was in the habit of receiving at her house a number of distinguished Russians, among them, of course, the energetic administrator of Bulgaria. The latter was anxious to prove his gratitude for the lady's hospitality in a tangible form, but, as it might have been awkward to do so through her husband, a person named M., a humble admirer, was fixed on, to whom the Prince sold the tithe of East Bulgaria for three millions of francs. As Mr. M. did not possess so large a sum, he instantly resold the agreement to a Greek banker at Constantinople for three millions-and-a-half in cash. Of the proceeds, the sum agreed on was forwarded to Sofia, while the balance was divided between Madame B. and Mr. M. The International Commissioners, we understand, did not fully approve of the transaction.

ELECTRIC LIGHT REFLECTORS.—Chappuis, Factory, 69, Fleet-street.—[ADVT.]

LYCEUM.—HAMLET, MONDAY, Dec. 30.

MR. HENRY IRVING, Sole Lessee and Manager.—On MONDAY EVENING, Dec. 30, and EVERY EVENING, at 7:30, will be presented Shakespeare's tragedy of HAMLET. Hamlet, Mr. Irving; Claudius, Mr. Forrester; Polonius, Mr. Chippendale; Laertes, Mr. F. Cooper; Horatio, Mr. Swinbourne; Rosencrantz, Mr. Elwood; Guildensterne, Mr. Pinero; Osric, Mr. Kyrle Bellew; Marcellus, Mr. Gibson; Bernardo, Mr. Tapping; Francisco, Mr. Robinson; Reynaldo, Mr. Cartwright; Priest, Mr. Collett; Messenger, Mr. Harwood; First Player, Mr. Beaumont; Second Player, Mr. Everard; First Gravedigger, Mr. S. Johnson; Second Gravedigger, Mr. A. Andrews; Ghost of Hamlet's Father, Mr. Mead; Gertrude, Miss Pauncefort; Player Queen, Miss Sedley; and Ophelia, Miss Ellen Terry. The curtain will rise punctually on "Hamlet" at 7:30. Stage Manager, Mr. H. J. Loveday. Box office of the theatre, under the direction of Mr. Hurst, open from 10 till 5, where seats may be taken one month in advance. Prices: Private boxes, three guineas to one guinea and a half; stalls, 10s.; dress circle, 6s.; upper circle, 3s.; pit, 2s.; gallery, 1s. Acting Manager, Mr. Bram Stoker.

LYCEUM.—HAMLET, MONDAY, Dec. 30.

THE EXAMINER.

LONDON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1878.

A SAD RETROSPECT.

So painful is it to look back upon the year now closing that we would willingly avoid any allusion to this period of disgrace, disaster, misfortune, and duplicity. Our daily contemporaries spare us the sad task of being compelled to review a series of political blunders, of Parliamentary personalities, of murderous accidents, and of melancholy deaths. Nothing good can be said of the year 1878; it presents no redeeming features. Look where we will, we can find nothing but the failures which are the inevitable results of human folly, the losses which are the consequences of human improvidence. Politically, a powerful Government, supported by a large majority in both Houses of Parliament, and backed by the great mass of the voters, who are ready and willing to support any straightforward and sensible policy, has succeeded in alienating the sympathies of almost all classes, although it still shows an unbroken front in the Legislature. It has thus undermined its position—since the present Parliament cannot last much longer—not from any want of talent or of industry in individual members of the Cabinet, not from the effect of the damaging but generally violent and unreasonable attacks of its opponents, but simply from the absence of those qualities without which no English statesman could ever hope to secure the full and thorough support of his fellow countrymen—Honesty and Firmness. Even mistaken views are, in England, sure of a certain amount of sympathy, if they are honestly entertained and energetically pushed forward. On account of the dogged determination and outspokedness which characterise uncompromising adherents of many causes, we look leniently on their errors, and, at worst, laugh at them good-humouredly. They are sure of our respect, if not of our approval. But, in 1878, all ministerial explanations, blue books, despatches, and memorandums, failed to prove anything but half-heartedness and concealment. Long and weary debates in both Houses, where the orators on either side have exhausted their powers of personality and invective, bring us no nearer to the comprehension of the policy pursued, but force upon us the conclusion that Ministers never had a policy except that of remaining in power as long as possible. The Eastern Question has, during the past year, overshadowed every other subject of home or foreign politics. And on this Eastern Question

the Government has, from the very beginning, shown neither the firmness nor the honesty which it is the right of every Englishman to demand. The spectacle displayed early in the year, when the British fleet was thrice ordered to advance, and was twice recalled, when, after much hesitation and several self-contradictory statements, important members of the Cabinet at last withdrew, was one which is fortunately unparalleled in the previous history of Great Britain's dealings with Foreign Powers. When, having allowed the Russians to occupy the fortifications of Constantinople, and to conclude the Treaty of San Stefano, Lord Salisbury launched his celebrated despatch, most persons were ready to forgive all previous vacillation, and to attribute it to the influence of that Foreign Minister who had proved his complete unfitness for his place by a gratuitous insult to a friendly Continental nation, our only possible ally in the event of a war with Russia, before he had shaken the dust of Downing-street from his shoes. But a few weeks sufficed to show that hesitation and disingenuousness were not his attributes alone, but were qualities inherent in the Cabinet. The disgraceful Secret Memorandum alienated those who had been induced to support the Government by the violence of the ex-leaders of the Opposition, and disgusted all except its mere mechanical adherents. Yet even an entire and absolute withdrawal of our demands before Russia's bluster would have been intelligible. The friends of Russia, at least, would have been satisfied, and the well disciplined rank and file of the Ministerial supporters would have been ready to acquiesce in the new aspect of affairs. But this straightforward course would have involved an abandonment of the theatrical *coup* which had been inaugurated by the six-million-vote and Lord Salisbury's despatch. England's retreat before Russia, the cowardice of England's Ministers, were therefore screened by the triumphal return from Berlin. That our Premier returned with neither peace nor honour has been proved *ad nauseam*. It is now only necessary to remark that the No-policy has been steadily continued—that, being afraid of the Czar of big Russia, the Ministers have fought the ruler of little Afghanistan, who has disappeared and left us a white elephant in the shape of an army to keep all the winter in a cold and mountainous country, and an impoverished province to govern which we don't want and are afraid to abandon.

Such, then, having been the acts of the Ministry, we look to the other side in the hopes of finding something to respect and some definite line with which we can cordially agree. Among the Conservatives we sought firmness and honesty in vain, and among the Liberals we look in vain for unity of purpose and for statesmanship. The Opposition was in the early part of the year entirely under the control of Russia's friends. The real, if not the nominal, Liberal leader watched with an acquiescent smile the gradual abandonment of Turkish provinces, the steady dissolution of the power of the Porte. The vote of six millions was carried against the Russophiles by the Ministry and a few more enlightened Liberals; while the absence of many eminent names from the division list proved that the party had not entirely degenerated into a mere tool of the member for Greenwich, but that there were some who disagreed with him *in toto* on the Eastern Question, although an honourable feeling of loyalty prevented them from voting with the Government. When it was found that the importation of troops from India was not meant for any more serious purpose than the paper dragon with which Chinese armies used formerly to attempt to frighten their foes, and Cyprus was proved to be an imposture, the Opposition was, for a time, once more united, but only against the Government. The union did not imply any agreement as to the policy which ought to have been pursued before or that which should be carried out then. Nor has this state of affairs much altered since. The violent outcries on the subject of the Afghan war and the indecent exhibition of ineptitude and folly made by Ex-officials of the highest standing has not shattered the strength of the Conservatives, but it has not gained for their Government any additional support. The majority of the English people feel that the Afghan war is a mistake. They condemn most strongly the unconstitutional, unjustifiable, and unpatriotic means which Lord Lawrence and his friends have adopted to oppose it; but their deep dissatisfaction with the Government policy has not been modified by the violence of the Government's enemies.

Until almost the very end of the year, there were no indications of any alteration of the Liberal policy, which was one of pure negation. They simply opposed everything brought forward by the Government; and we think that they were, in the majority of cases, right; for, though the six millions vote and the voyage of the Sepoys might have, and would have been, the right measures for an honest and straightforward Ministry to adopt, these wise precautions were rendered ineffective by the trembling hands which carried them out. But, still, until quite lately, the Opposition gave no signs of having a policy of their own. The great majority would repudiate the peace-at-any price party, and yet had no alternative to propose. In the recent debates, however, we think that signs of better things can be detected. Lord Hartington and Mr. Göschen distinctly disavowed any approval of concessions to Russia, and enunciated with sufficient clearness the deep distrust with which the declarations of Russia inspired them. From these speeches, and from these only, do we gather any hope. They are the only gleams of light in the black shadow which has gathered over Great Britain's statesmanship of 1878, the only clue which may probably guide us through the tortuous labyrinth constructed by mock-Imperial policy.

Of the loss which has fallen on the Royal family and the nation at large, it is hardly necessary to speak; so recent and so painful a death is yet fresh in every mind. During the present year an almost continuous pall has been cast over England. The early months were fatal to crowned heads and statesmen, the later ones to actors, authors, and philosophers; the whole year to life and prosperity. The families plunged into mourning by the *Princess Alice* disaster are visited by cold and pauperism; the miners saved from colliery accidents have now to face a still more terrible fate with their wives and children starving around them. The trade of the world is fast drifting into other hands, while the British workman, instead of striving by honest labour to preserve it, has reduced himself to penury in vain efforts to persuade his masters to increase his wages. They, too, are either already ruined, or are tottering on the verge of bankruptcy, while the collapse of the Scotch Bank has brought misery home to thousands who, but for this catastrophe, would have contributed their share to relieve the general distress. An early and cold winter has come, bringing with it a still further cessation of trade and a stoppage of work. We have to contend with increased expenditure and diminished receipts, we have a mourning and starving population, wretchedness at home,

war abroad; and in these times of trial, when we require wise statesmanship at the helm, we have a Government to guide us which declines to look at a compass, but steers wherever the wind carries it, and is not unlikely, by wrecking the ship of State on some rock which ordinary precaution would have avoided, to verify the prophecies of its great opponent by reducing England to the level of Portugal, Holland, or Spain.

EUROPE IN 1878.

The tranquillity of the whole Continent more or less interests England, but in no country is it more important that peace should prevail in order that England should be prosperous than in France. The Government of France has during the last year secured the sympathies of nearly all parties in this country; it has almost entirely avoided those extreme measures which were not unlikely to be adopted as a retaliation for the decidedly oppressive steps put in force by the Government of the 16th of May; it has, on the whole, pursued a wise and moderate course, even if in some few cases it has exceeded those bounds which, in a country like England, where the institutions are consolidated by centuries of constitutional government, would be considered moderate. In its proceedings against the Conservative members of the Legislature, and in the vote on the subject of the increase of stipends to the poor clergy, it has gone considerably farther than would even a Radical Cabinet in England; but great allowance must be made for the strong party feeling in France, which differs not only in degree, but in kind, from that on this side of the Channel. Here every one, be he Radical or Tory, wishes the great landmarks of the Constitution to be preserved. For, of course, we do not speak for the few Ultra-Republican or Home Rulers who would upset everything which has been held sacred by Englishmen for many centuries. But in France the dispute rages, not on whether Whigs or Tories should be in power, but whether the country should be governed by a king, by an emperor, or by Republican institutions; hence a very great deal which would be considered violent and totally unjustifiable in England becomes not only comprehensible but even praiseworthy in a French Ministry. Making these due allowances, it will be conceded almost universally that M. Dufaure's Ministry has succeeded in steering between the Scylla of Radical Republicanism on the one hand, and the Charybdis of the combined dangers of Imperialism and Ultramontanism on the other.

Notwithstanding all the unfavourable circumstances which preceded the Exhibition of the past year, it has been so decided a success as to make us fear that the experiment is likely to be repeated elsewhere. It would hardly have been possible to have opened the Exhibition under more unpromising auspices; Germany refused its concurrence; a war was raging in the East; industry and trade were paralysed in the whole of Europe; so many failures had taken place and so many persons had lost money that it seemed highly improbable that the great show of Paris would attract a large crowd of pleasure seekers; yet the Universal Exhibition has indubitably been a great success, and the immediate financial loss will be tenfold recouped, not only by the material results of customs duties and other receipts, but still more by the lessons taught industrious and frugal French people. France appears to be almost the only country which has hitherto remained to a great extent untouched by the utter stagnation of commerce and manufacture which has paralysed not only Europe, but even America; and the judicious policy of M. Waddington, who has proved that the Duc Decazes was not an absolutely indispensable factor in the diplomacy of France, has secured her from an active intervention in the complicated Eastern question which, if adopted, would inevitably have resulted in damaging if not disastrous discussions with Germany. The Duc Decazes conducted the French Foreign Office during a period of the greatest danger and difficulty; he succeeded in evading a war which Prince Bismarck was three years ago desirous of forcing on his late enemy, who had recovered from the severe blows inflicted upon her with surprising rapidity. Many persons, both in France and abroad, feared that, when the Ministry of the 16th of May resigned, the Foreign Office in Paris would abandon that policy of inactivity which was indispensable to enable the country to recover from its misfortunes. It was feared that the Duc Decazes' successor would either concede too much, or, by conceding too little, once more plunge France into war or into political difficulties hardly less serious than war. These expectations have fortunately not been fulfilled. M. Waddington has proved himself as well able to manage the complicated task of avoiding the shoals and quicksands of politics as his titled predecessor, and, for those who have not lost all love for England in cosmopolitan love for all nations, it is pleasant to reflect that the able foreign Minister of France is, by descent and education, more than half an Englishman.

Turning elsewhere, we look in vain in other countries for any example of that moderate prosperity which, thanks to economy and caution, still prevails in France. The five milliards sent to Germany have been spent in fortifications, guns, and other warlike apparatus, or have been deposited in the coffers of the State. They have resulted, not in enriching the empire which seized them, but in increasing the wealth of the country from which they were taken. If it were ever safe for erring mortals to assert that the Divine judgment has been exercised in a manner patent to all, surely the comparison of the present condition of France and Germany would justify such an assertion. Even the most enthusiastic admirer of Prince Bismarck and the most violent adherent of German unity must now confess that the results of blood and iron, on the one hand, and of peaceful, honest industry, on the other, are so clearly contrasted that the Chelsea philosopher might begin to doubt the virtue of the former and cease to consider the latter to be the incarnation of all evil. After Sedan Prince Bismarck and his Imperial master had the one opportunity which, according to poets, is given to all men. They refused to take it, and carried on a war which, however justifiable in the beginning, then degenerated into a mere invasion for purposes of conquest and robbery. We are too apt, in criticising the conduct of the Russians at San Stefano, to forget the precedent on which they acted. In comparison with the terms extorted from prostrate France, those demanded from dismembered Turkey were comparatively easy, and, when we review the conduct of the Czar, it is well to remember that he is not the first apostle of bloodshed and rapine. Germany is now groaning under the weight of the manacles she herself has riveted. In the enthusiasm for unity, or, in other words, in the hatred for the French which was so carefully fomented by Prince Bismarck and the military party, freedom was forgotten, and it has taken no less than seven years for the Germans to find out that, while extorting a tribute from the French, they were making themselves

tributary to the despotic will of one man who knows no law and respects no covenant. It is not unnatural, therefore, that a feeling of uneasiness has for some time been prevalent in Germany; and, however often it may be asserted, or even proved, that the two attempts to assassinate the Emperor did not owe their origin to any International or Socialist plot, yet no man who studies the history of nations from a philosophic point of view can fail to perceive in these two crimes a symptom of the serious disease of the body politic. Taken alone, they would mean little; taken in connection with the demonstrations which have been suppressed, the newspapers that have been seized, and the pamphlets which have been burned, they mean that the great majority of the German working men are profoundly dissatisfied with the condition to which military despotism has now reduced them, and, what is infinitely more serious, that many, if not the majority of the thinkers of the German Empire fully share this dissatisfaction, even if they do not sympathise with the means taken to remove it.

In the Eastern Question, which has convulsed England, and has shaken the Government of Austria to its very foundations, the German people, as such, have sympathised with the Turks; while the German Government, assuming to play the part of the honest broker, has given all possible support to the annexationist tendencies of the Russian Empire. Let English readers fully understand that, notwithstanding all appearances of Constitutional Government, notwithstanding the professions of all German newspapers, Germany is governed by nothing but a military despotism, and the voice of the German people is so completely stifled by the precautionary measures of an ubiquitous police that its voice can never be heard. Nay, more, so ingenious is the policy of Prince Bismarck, so perfect is the machinery by which he holds forty millions in bonds, that he has succeeded in manufacturing a false voice, which assumes to be that of the people, but is, in fact, nothing but an Opposition invented for the purpose of proving the beneficent influence of his own Government. Hardly one of the numerous so-called Liberal newspapers in Germany is independent of Government patronage; hardly an editor has his hands clean from the touch of Government gold; not an article passes through the Press but has been carefully examined and corrected by a Government censor. These assertions sound staggering; they are, however, strictly true. It can safely be stated that not a line is printed or published in Germany without the consent and approval of Prince Bismarck or his tools; and that the liberty of the Press which, until the last six months, existed in Bavaria, in a very modified form, has been entirely destroyed by the recent laws against the Social Democrats. There is no doubt that a large portion of the interest, if not of the capital, of the money paid by France is now employed in subsidising not only the Government, but, more especially, Opposition organs.

While Germany has been almost unaffected by the Eastern question, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, always in a precarious condition, has more than once trembled on the verge of complete dissolution. It would have been possible for England to strengthen the bonds which unite the different parts of this conglomeration of States by an energetic Eastern policy; but the opportunity was neglected, and the disintegrating forces are at work more actively than ever. Count Andrassy has, it is true, weathered the storm for the present. Notwithstanding the dissatisfaction felt at the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the money required to keep the troops there has been voted, and a second pseudo-constitutional Government is having its own way entirely against the opinion of the majority of the people. They, too, feel no sympathy with aggressive Russia, and loudly condemn the friendly neutrality observed towards the Northern Empire by their rulers; but, although they dare to speak louder and to write more strongly than the Germans (who, in fact, may neither say nor write anything), they do as little. The Government of Austria is corrupt to the very core; the monarch can command a majority whenever he pleases, and on any subject, for, although some members of the legislatures of Hungary and Austria may be above pecuniary bribes, there are hardly any who are not to be "got at" by promises of decorations, titles, fat sinecures, or other still more illegitimate means. It was open to England to avert the catastrophe which is slowly but surely gathering over the House of Hapsburg; our Cabinet could, by concluding an offensive and defensive alliance with Francis Joseph, have secured a bulwark against Russia, and have given the dynasty that element of popularity without which, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, no Royal family can continue to reign. It may still be possible to do something in this direction. Vienna statesmen look anxiously westward, and at a sign from Lord Beaconsfield would be ready to throw in their lot with the Western powers, for this is their only salvation. Threatened by the Cossack hordes on the north-east and by the Germans on the north-west, bearded by Italians on the south, and bullied by the Slavs in the East; with Hungarian arrogance and Austrian indifference contending for the mastery in their own empire; with nothing except an unpopular, immoral, and altogether bigoted Court to hold the Confederation together with half a million of disciplined but ignorant soldiers; a popular foreign alliance is the one and only event which can save the Hapsburg dynasty from the same just fate which has overtaken the Bourbons in France and in Italy.

Little need be said about Russia. We need only remark that the same dissatisfaction, the same profound disbelief which in Germany affects the working classes, has in Russia invaded the students and the *bourgeoisie*. It is idle to prophesy a rapid dissolution of the Russian Empire, or to foretel from the revolutionary elements at work, that the Romanoff dynasty is approaching a catastrophe; the enormous power still wielded in Russia by the military and aristocratic parties, backed as they are by the complete ignorance of fifty million peasants, should be sufficient to prove that such prognostications are at least premature, if not entirely erroneous. Russia will, no doubt, pursue her career of conquest for many years, and will not be impeded by a few assassinations, or a few disturbances got up by hare-brained students. To talk of a Russian Emperor giving a constitution to his people is infinitely more absurd, if it were possible to be more absurd, than to suppose that Servians, Bulgarians, and Roumelians, because they are Christians, go to church every Sunday in black coats and tall hats, with their wives and families.

Neither Italy nor Spain has been spared some slight symptoms of the disease which has shown such violence in Russia and Germany, but in neither of these countries is it likely that any very great change will occur within the next twelve months. The Ministerial crisis in Italy has hardly the importance which has been attached to it by many of the daily papers. The same party is in power, and will remain in power for many years to come. An appeal to the con-

stituencies will strengthen the extreme Radicals at the expense of their more moderate colleagues, and Signor Cairoli's fall, having been brought about by a combination of totally antagonistic elements, has not paved the way for any Ministry entertaining different opinions to those which have now become almost commonplaces in Italy. The new Cabinet, formed as it is of comparatively insignificant members, is not likely to be supported by the majority in the Houses of Parliament, and nothing could have proved the popularity of the ex-Premier more forcibly than the difficulty found in forming the Ministry. The moderation displayed by Count Corti at Berlin has certainly caused dissatisfaction to the extreme party, but he, as well as M. Waddington, have proved that the greed for annexation, and the hunger after a neighbour's goods, have not yet extended to France and Italy.

TRADE AND THE STATE.

There are never wanting alarmists who are ready to tell us that political affairs and political dogmas in England are by no means so surely settled as we sometimes take them to be. These alarmists have for some time past been taking as their text the apparent revival of Protectionist doctrines which the last year or two has seen. "Was there," they say, "any doctrine which was more firmly seated in the political creed of all Englishmen, no matter of what party, than Free Trade? A few years, almost a few months, of adversity, and Protectionists spring up again like mushrooms." Still more recently, hints have been hazarded, not, indeed, as yet very openly, of a possible backsliding on the part of public opinion to which a mere clamour for reciprocity would be as nothing. We have seen how, for some time, extreme politicians have not hesitated to make the Government responsible for the present badness of trade, in a manner which, on any accepted system of political economy, they would find it uncommonly hard to justify. Now, from this negative accusation, on the one hand, to a positive recommendation on the other is a very short step, though it, perhaps, may not be taken by the same set of grumblers. If Government can do so much in making bad trade, can it not also do much in making trade good? So we have an association of miners meeting under a well-known Member of Parliament, and demanding solemnly a Parliamentary inquiry into this badness of trade. Such an inquiry is not, we may be sure, intended to be conducted merely for the advancement of economic science and the satisfaction of inquisitive people. The committee, in the extremely unlikely event of its ever getting appointed, would be expected by Mr. Macdonald's constituents not merely to examine and report but to suggest. Already some rumours are heard of the sort of suggestions which would be considered appropriate. These might be more or less socialistic. They might go as far as the French lunacy of national workshops or the German lunacy of industries not exactly under national management but conducted in some incomprehensible manner for the benefit of the workmen, but, for the present, it is more likely that some gigantic system of State aid to distressed industries would be demanded, or, perhaps, even less than this, some arrangement for helping workers out of work in a more or less direct fashion from the taxpayers' pockets.

There is, we believe, sufficient sense left in England to render the adoption of even the least extravagant of such schemes as unlikely as the adoption of the most extravagant. But it is by no means improbable that some of the more plausible of them may find advocates interested or sincere among us, should the present distress continue, and it is, therefore, not superfluous to point out once more the very well-known and obvious objections to any such diversion of State funds from their legitimate purposes. That any one except in the vaguest manner would even suggest direct protection or a bounty system is scarcely likely. It is not too much to say that we could not do any such thing in England without turning all our fiscal, municipal, and administrative arrangements topsy-turvy. But there does not, perhaps, at first sight, seem to be the same difficulty about State aid to individual workmen. In times of distress people are harrowed by tales of that distress, and, with the sort of reliance on the intangible which even Englishmen have not entirely outgrown, they wonder whether Government cannot do something. The parish "does something" by means of rates; why should not Government "do something" by means of taxes? Both rate and tax present themselves to the ordinary British mind as something that has to be paid by reluctant contributors, and of any other distinction it knows little. Yet the distinction is, after all, the one thing which, in that very motley wonder of the world, the British constitution, all competent observers have agreed to admire, and the one thing the absence of which has hitherto been the weak point of all imitations of this wonder. Wherever the State has stepped in to meddle directly with private well being or ill being, there (putting economic results out of the question) two things have invariably happened. On the one hand, individuals have come to look on the State as a milch cow, and have been easily reduced to acquiescence in illegal or improper Government by making the cow yield more copiously. On the other hand, the interference of the State has robbed them of their self respect and of the very habit and power of managing their own affairs. There is evidence enough of the harm which the old Poor-law did in the years immediately before its alteration. This harm, which was then partial and confined to the rural districts, would be by a system of Government relief magnified and intensified a hundredfold. That such relief would be sure to be largely misapplied, that the cost of affording it would be relatively enormous, are very minor points. The real point of importance is that, if the administration of it were ideally good, it would still be in itself ideally bad.

The true remedy, in any distress of the kind that is now weighing on the country, is simply the old one of private charity, stimulated, guided, and helped, if need be, from Government sources, but in its origin strictly voluntary and independent. The State in England meddles with no man's prosperity. It does not say, as some fantastic American legislator is said to have once said, "You shall not have more than twenty thousand a year." In the same way, it meddles, and should meddle, with no man's adversity, except in so far as it recognises the duty of preserving life through the medium of the *Commune* or parish. But, at the same time, the State has a considerable machinery actually at work in directing and supervising these functions of local government, and by means of this machinery it can assist the flow of private benevolence into the right channels, and quicken the sometimes rather torpid action of local authorities very materially. This it should certainly do; and the agency of the Local Government Board, which has already been set to work partially and to some small extent in this way, might with great advantage be extended in its application. But the actual money should in all cases come from voluntary efforts. Only

by this means can the evils to which we have already alluded be avoided, and only by this means can the dangerous sense of injury which increase of taxation for relief purposes would infallibly produce in the smaller and more struggling taxpayers be avoided likewise. For this feeling of injury and jealousy is inseparable from the system of State aid, and is one of its most objectionable features. Fortunately, too, there is not the least reason for thinking that, in any calamity which for a long time England may see, private munificence will be either unable or unwilling to meet the demand. All experience contradicts such a thought, and England can certainly claim that her charity begins at home, though it by no means stops there. Except for the purposes of agitation, and of agitation among the most ignorant class of the community, there can be no excuse for raising the cry of State aid. We may add, too, that, except for a similar purpose, or for the less reprehensible but not over creditable purpose of temporarily stopping clamorous mouths, there can be no reason for advocating Parliamentary inquiry into the present state of trade. The causes of that state are not mysterious or recondite; they are patent to those who have taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with elementary economic laws and with the facts of the present case. It is to be feared that no Committee, Parliamentary or other, will succeed in making them patent to those who have not chosen or have been unable to make this acquainance.

THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER OF INDIA.

(FROM OUR MILITARY CONTRIBUTOR.)

The real root of the whole Afghan question lies in the practicability and probability of an invasion of India by its only vulnerable flank, the north-west frontier. Whatever verbiage may be expended to obscure this fact, there is no doubt that the fear of such an invasion at some time or another has mainly influenced the masterly inactivity of the past and the spasmodic activity of the present policy. This being so, it is curious to note how both sets of politicians, with a superior air of confidence, real or assumed, assure the public that "an invasion of India is almost impracticable," a simplicity of belief which must excite a considerable amount of derision in the mind of the Czar's able lieutenant, who has been so very near of late in putting the matter to a practical test. That Lords Lawrence and Northbrook, and others implicated with them in the late policy, should persist in holding such a purblind view is natural and logical enough under the circumstances; but it seems somewhat paradoxical for Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury to hold such an opinion; for, if an invasion of India be so impracticable as they pretend, there remains no *raison d'être* for their policy. And yet Lord Beaconsfield at the Mansion House, and Lord Salisbury in the Lords, have both declared that an invasion of India is almost impracticable. It is inconceivable how any one who has read the history of India, mastered the geography of Central Asia, and carefully studied the Afghan correspondence and Central Asian papers, can seriously make such an assertion. The Foreign Secretary evidently still retains his marvellous faith in the efficacy of large maps to prevent invasion; though we might reasonably expect that the superior incredulity with which, on a celebrated occasion, he rebuked the fears of a deputation would have been shaken by the actual presence of the Russian columns on the Attrek and the Oxus, and the undoubted existence of an understanding between General Kaufmann and Shere Ali, all of which follows so swiftly upon his profession of scepticism.

About the probability of an attempted invasion of India under Russian auspices we shall say nothing, as that has been sufficiently demonstrated by the events of the year now passing away. As to its practicability, with the aid of Mr. Wyld's Staff Map of Central Asia and Afghanistan and the light of Indian History, past and present, the student can judge for himself whether that which has happened so often before is quite so impracticable in the immediate future as has been asserted. Before showing, however, how often, by whom, by what routes, and under what circumstances, India has been invaded, we shall offer a few remarks about mountain frontiers in general and the North-West frontier of India in particular, the advantages and assumed impregnability of which have been so loudly declared by some people.

For our purpose, India may be compared to a huge citadel, with an ocean ditch round two of its sides and a mountain rampart, pierced by several gates, on its third. It is only the north-western portion of this rampart, with an extent, roughly speaking, of from six to seven hundred miles, and of considerable height and breadth, that is vulnerable to attack. This belt of mountains is inhabited by the most predatory and blood-guilty tribes in the world, and behind it, at distances varying from twenty-five to sixty miles, flows the Indus, further supplemented on the upper section of its line, above Mittunkote, by the five rivers of the Punjaub, the whole forming, no doubt, were all other conditions equal, a series of strong strategic lines of defence in theory. Practically, however, the defenders of the first line are placed, as it were, "between the devil and the deep sea," that is to say, on a line of 700 miles between mountains containing 170,000 fighting men of the Hill Tribes and a broad, rapid, and unbridged river, for the bridges of boats at Attock and Sukkur are of little account in this calculation. This river, moreover, is totally unprovided with any entrenched camp, modern fortress, or other place of arms for the concentration or rallying of troops. The risk and difficulty of guarding the inlets of this long and stupendous barrier under such conditions would be incalculably increased were the Russians, or even Shere Ali backed and guided by them, to appear on the other side of it. To the strategic disadvantage of having to fight with a river in the rear would be added the political detriment arising from the perturbation caused by the approach of an invader on the minds of an Asiatic population closely watching and waiting for the result. When that time comes, should it ever come, we may rest assured that all the good government in the world, and all the fine homilies about justice to everybody but ourselves, and so forth, with which, under distinguished guidance, since Lord Palmerston's death, we have been trying to humbug ourselves and to deprecate the wrath to come, will not save us from the consequences of any defeat.

In the event of an invasion, a withdrawal across the Indus might, in a military sense, become advisable, if not unavoidable, while politically and morally it would be ruinous to us. When Lord Dalhousie, by the inexorable logic of facts, was forced to break up and annex the Khâlsa State in 1849, there were not wanting able and far-sighted military men who counselled him to make the Indus, judiciously fortified at certain points, our boundary, and to hand over the strip of territory between it and the mountains to the Afghans. Contrary to the advice of his military counsellors, and to his own instinctive

feeling as well, he allowed himself to be ruled by the civilians round him, and to annex right up to the foot of the hills. From that hour, as the Military Secretary to the Government told him, it was only a question of time when the next advance would have to be made across the mountains, in order to secure the approaches to our rampart against the enterprises, open or insidious, of possible enemies; for it was to be borne in mind that, once across the Indus, the exigencies of our position in India would never permit us to turn back again. Nevertheless, at the most critical period of our fortunes in India, in June, 1857, the withdrawal across the Indus was the very blunder which Lord Lawrence would have perpetrated; and from the consequences of that masterly stroke of policy we were only saved by the urgent remonstrances and opposition of Sir Sydney Cotton, the general officer commanding the Peshawur Division, and of Nicholson, Edwardes, and James, the district officers.

The advantages of possessing both sides of a mountain chain are so obvious as scarcely to seem to require demonstration. Some military writers tell us that waiting inside the chain, with concentrated forces ready to fall on the enemy as he issues in straggling and weary divisions from the defiles, is the best defence; but that assumes all the accessories of the defence to be favourable, and those of the offence to be the reverse, an agreeable state of things for the first, which, as likely as not, may not exist in reality. It assumes, certainly, that no river, like the Indus, and no dubious population, like that of India, are in the rear of the defending army. On the other hand, there is a well-known military axiom that the best defensive is the most powerful offensive; and, whether it be in the open field or in siege operations, the commander who can make the most rapid and effective excursions or sorties, in order to upset the plans and combinations of his enemy, or to nip them in the bud, is the strongest man of war in the end. But the general who elects to sit passive behind his ramparts, trusting merely to their height and thickness, and without the power to use his own sally-ports, or even to look through his own loopholes, richly deserves the fate which must eventually overtake him—that of being undermined in his citadel and blown up.

A mountain chain, only one side of which is guarded, can never prove an effective barrier to a determined invader. Military history, in India and in Europe, affords many examples in support of this assertion. The great natural barrier of the Alps has never saved Italy from invasion, and, from the days of Hannibal to those of Napoleon, invaders have passed and repassed them in spite of the power that, for the moment, was supreme in the plains of Piedmont or Lombardy. The neglect to seize and completely dominate the Bohemian defiles in 1866, and the awaiting attack within the Imperial borders on the downs of Pardubitz, ended in the expulsion of the Hapsburg Kaiser from the German Bund. Coming down, again, to almost yesterday, it will be conceded that, if the Danube fortresses and the Turkish armies in the field had belonged to any other Government but that of Constantinople, the Russians would never have crossed the Balkans to this day. Varna, Shumla, Silistria, Rustchuk, and Plevna, were the real defences of the Balkan chain, and they were in front of it, and not behind it. As things at present are on our north-west frontier, there is nothing to prevent a Gourko, or a Skobelef, with twenty or thirty thousand Calmuck, Turkoman, Oozbeck, and Afghan horsemen, repeating the exploits of the Bulgarian campaign, and "cooling their horses' hoofs in the waters of the Indus."

TRADE AND FINANCE.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

Although no real importance is to be attached to artificial divisions of time, it is well to take advantage of the close of a year to review the position, and to see if the lessons of the past are likely to be profitable in the future. The year 1878 opened in the midst of political disquietude, which, practically, paralysed industry and enterprise; and it closes upon a period of financial anxiety and agitation wholly without parallel. More mortifying even than the revelation of our temporary incapacity to uphold our well-earned reputation as the leaders of the world's commerce has been the exposure of the unsoundness of our financial morality—at least as regards a not unimportant portion of the trading community. Our banking system, both private, limited, and unlimited, has been put upon its trial and found wanting, and we have not yet sufficiently recovered from the shock of this discovery to be enabled to devise means for remedying its defects. Furnaces are extinguished, looms are standing idle, mines are left unworked, and capital remains unproductive. The labouring classes are suffering the direst distress, and many of those who are higher placed in society are oppressed by financial embarrassment. Some consolation is afforded by the fact that the necessaries of life have fallen to a lower point than has been known of late, and, with the exception of meat, are likely to fall still further. The purchasing power of gold is daily becoming enhanced, and individuals with fixed incomes derived from safe appointments and sound and steady securities are reaping the advantage of this condition of affairs. It is within the recollection of all how differently the *rentier* class was affected some few years since. Then the commercial inflation, which is in itself an indication of unsoundness, had caused prices to rise, and the journals were full of complaints as to the inadequacy of ordinary incomes to meet the requirements of the times. Those who were wise, then preached that the position was an abnormal one, and that the reaction would be sudden and severe; and events have fully borne out their predictions. But for the commercial community there is, we think, little proximate consolation to be offered. A somewhat similar state of things, though arising from wholly dissimilar causes, occurred in Vienna in 1873, and now, after a lapse of nearly six years, commerce in Austria has not recovered its equilibrium, nor have its traders enjoyed any intermediate period of prosperity. A gleam of hope is to be found in the fact that the pecuniary pressure in England has attracted, through the action of the foreign exchanges, large sums of continental capital, the contribution of France alone being estimated at no less than twenty millions sterling. But it cannot be too strongly insisted upon, that the comparative ease which results from this circumstance is deceptive, in so much as the revulsion would be all the stronger were this money to be suddenly withdrawn, as, from financial fright, may at any time be the case. The Bank of England, too, by maintaining its nominal rate at five per cent., ostensibly with a desire to reassure the public, does much to create an artificial feeling of confidence. It is known to the well-informed that the Bank is charging six and even seven per cent. upon the best bills, and for advances against the most approved securities, and yet the rate by which the outside world is assumed to

regulate its transactions is kept at a far lower figure. This policy is most short-sighted, and cannot too strongly be condemned. It is better for us to face the actual situation, and see how best to set about restoring confidence and credit. The market for foreign securities has been stagnant, and new introductions have scarcely been successful. France is, at present, relieving us of all stocks of a speculative character with which we are willing to part, and will, we think, continue to do so for some time hence. This is, selfishly speaking, an eminently satisfactory manner of employing her money as regards relief to our immediate embarrassments. Capital in this country was frightened out of foreign investments by the revelations of the Parliamentary Committee, and was driven back upon home enterprises. It is, we think, by no means improbable that the disappointment which investors have met with in this latter direction may cause sound foreign loans once more to find favour here. Honestly dealt with and cautiously bestowed, there is no reason why our surplus profits, when the period again arrives for realising them, should not find remunerative employment out of our own country and colonies. New forces are at work in the world's political and social economy. We are passing through a period of rearrangement and revolution. The silver question must be settled, our banking system revised, those trading concerns which are intrinsically rotten—and there are many such—must be cleared off, prices must be readjusted, and greater economy practised in the scale of individual expenditure. People must be content, for the present, not to push business; and, above all, the spirit of reckless gambling and the desire to realise rapid fortunes which has recently ruled the trading community must be eliminated. Then, and not till then, will the halcyon period return. The simile of the Augean stables is a trite one, but it is the most applicable that can be found. The cleansing process is in progress, but it will take time, and it must be thorough and complete. The year 1879 opens upon a gloomy prospect, but the lessons of the last few months, properly taken to heart, may help to illuminate it.

THE STOCK EXCHANGE SCANDAL.—The investigations of the Committee have resulted in the expulsion of four members and the indefinite "suspension" of two others. We were enabled, three weeks since, to give our readers an account of the proceedings which have led to this decision, and we are assured that the practices referred to have extended over a longer period and to a larger body of individuals than could actually be proved in evidence. It is to be hoped that the laudably severe action of the Committee may have the result of completely arresting the progress of such nefarious transactions. One more step remains to be taken. The Corporation of London publish annually in *The Times* (which is almost the only expense to which they put themselves in return for the receipt of some 6,000*l.* to 8,000*l.* per annum) a list of the sworn brokers of the city of London, which is afterwards affixed to the doors of the Royal Exchange. There is nothing to prevent persons expelled from the Stock Exchange from sheltering themselves behind this announcement of their names and executing orders through a member of the Stock Exchange, dividing their commission with them. There are plenty of such "*remisiers*" in existence who cannot, from various causes, obtain admission into the hallowed precincts. The Stock Exchange Committee does not publish the names of those it condemns, and these latter can easily continue to entrap the unwary in this manner. The Corporation of London has a public duty to perform, which duty it lamentably neglects. It receives £5 a year from every person applying, with two introductions, to be made a sworn broker. It exacts a simple declaration from them that "they will not practice fraud or collusion;" but it exercises no kind of after supervision over them, and takes no security for the due execution of this promise. Many persons practise as brokers, in various departments, without even taking the trouble to fulfil this formality, and, although there is a fine of £100 attached to such a proceeding, no case has ever transpired of their being informed against. The Corporation should do something to protect the public, in compensation for the very handsome annual remuneration which it receives for the purpose.

CONSOLS.—The Government has for some time past fulfilled its financial requirements by the emission of three and six months' Treasury Bills. These have been almost entirely taken up by France, and while money was fairly cheap, this measure, motivated by a desire to avoid the unpopular step of making a fresh issue of Consols, was successful and well-advised. Now, however, the renewal of these bills could only be effected at the rate of five per cent. per annum, or above, a proceeding which would be both undignified and undesirable. A fresh emission of Consols is, therefore, considered to be imminent. No period could well be more favourable for such an operation, as Government stocks are being largely absorbed by the public, who continue to withdraw their deposits from the Joint Stock Banks, and to invest either in the Funds or in the debenture stocks of the leading English railways. Consols, properly so called, are always the medium for speculation, as being more readily transferable than New Three per Cents or Reduced. The jobbers, in anticipation of the fresh issue, are "bears" of Consols, and the New Threes and Reduced, which are identically the same security, are consequently purchasable at one-quarter per cent. lower than the more current stock. In addition to this, New Three per Cents and Reduced carry three months' interest, or three-quarters per cent., while Consols are quoted "*ex div.*" Hence, there results a difference of fully one per cent. in favour of the former, of which intending investors would do well to avail themselves.

THE BANK OF FRANCE.—Monsieur André has now a formidable rival in Baron Davillier, also one of the *haute banque*. Both are equally desirable governors of the Bank of France, but Monsieur André's recent commercial experience has been more extensive.

TRUSTEES AND THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY.—Among the various plans suggested for enabling trustees still to hold the Converted East Indian Stock, one in particular appears to be eminently practical. The difficulty, as matters stand at present, is that trustees must either take 125 for the stock, and invest in some other securities, or must yearly invest the ridiculously small sum of 5*s.* per cent. per annum, in order to form a sinking fund. It is now suggested that a committee should be selected from and by the trustees, to invest the *total* of all the small sums thus accumulating. This could be easily done, and safe investments chosen beforehand. Trustees need then only remit their small annual instalments to this committee, and would receive a receipt for them. After a certain number of years, according to the sum deposited, they would obtain the stock selected.

THE EXAMINER.

1878.

Christmas is past, the waning year sobs out its life.
New vistas open, with new worlds of joy and strife.
Dare we look back and mark the hand of time,
Where death hath made fresh gaps in every line?
Nay, rather let us forward cast our thoughts, and say
The coming year shall wipe our cares away.
All that is past must be. Its sorrows yours and mine.
Let, then, the tears of seventy-eight bring joy in seventy-nine.

—o—

Friends all around have gone to their long rest.
Why mourn? They do but sleep; 'tis far the best
That they were spared the turmoil of life's din.
While we remaining, have to battle on 'gainst sin;
And, tho' sad memories wake, and bitter thoughts *will* rise,
'Tis but our destiny. No flower that blooms but dies,
Yet, budding fresh next year, shows an unerring sign
That from tears in seventy-eight, spring joys in seventy-nine.

"LABOUCHERE IN LIMBO."

It is a beautiful sight to see two good and great men wrestle together for the mastery, with the sole object of vindicating some great principle for which its believers are willing to die. The strength of each, like that of the immortal Blacksmith who kept all the commandments, is as "the strength of ten, because his heart is pure." The world looks on in awe, fearful lest either should conquer, because it is so sad a thing to see goodness overcast. Such a spectacle was witnessed the other day in Westminster, when the immaculate Mr. Wybrow Robertson, of the Royal Aquarium for Loose Fish, and the equally immaculate Mr. Henry Labouchere, of the phenomenal journal called (with exquisite humour) *Truth*, fought together in the legal arena, to the great edification of all lovers of virtue. Curiously enough, these good and great men did not show themselves above the common passions of their kind; for, while the first said the second was a Thief, the second said the first was a Rogue and a Liar. *Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ?* The victory, if victory it can be called when both combatants are besmirched from top to toe, and roll, clutching each other, in the dust of the arena' was with Mr. Labouchere; that is, he lay *uppermost*, and the jury gave him his due award. But it was a pity, after all, that the struggle took place, and that two distinguished persons, with so lively a resemblance to one another—with so much subtlety of financial genius and so exquisitely fine a moral sense—should have ever determined on mortal combat. The public loves and admires them both: its Robertson, because he has turned the Royal Aquarium into a haven where at any moment Virtue, however fallen, can smothe its ruffled plumage and rest its dove-like wings, weary with their flight from Cremorne and the Argyll Rooms; its Labouchere, because, as all the world knows, he has established a literary organ which puts Falsehood to shame, and wherein Truth, without any ridiculous and quite superfluous clothing, may appeal to the noble proclivities of all who adore the Nude.

The matter of their quarrel is scarcely worth discussing. It seems that the beneficent humourist of our contemporary was himself at one time connected with the Royal Aquarium, and that, while there, he did not quite agree with Mr. Robertson. Certain commercial irregularities occurred, and, although he was willing to "hush them up" in consideration of Mr Robertson's vote and sympathetic co-operation, the tables were turned upon him, and he had to withdraw to the more congenial occupation of "starting a Paper." All this was scarcely to be wondered at; nor was it to be wondered at much that one chief mission of the Paper, when started, was to hunt down all the proprietor's enemies—financial, theatrical, and social. So Mr. Labouchere, with no vindictiveness whatever, but solely to do what was good and right, showed up Mr. Robertson, and Mr. Robertson brought his action; and, though all the world expected a verdict of *arcades ambo*—that is, of course, immaculate gentlemen both—the jury decided that Mr. Robertson had no just cause for proceeding. In this verdict we heartily agree. It would be a very hard thing, indeed, if, when one had gone to the expense of starting a Paper, one could not say what one pleased, especially about one's enemies and the people one disliked. We will go further—and we know that Mr. Labouchere will agree with us, when we aver roundly that the liberty of the subject is threatened if one cannot, in one's own newspaper, take up not only one's own quarrels, but those of one's wife, aunt, uncle, or even one's grandmother. Happily, the rights of *Truth* and open discussion have been vindicated in this particular, and we are warranted in expecting more personal revelations and recriminations at the earliest possible date.

If there be one virtue which Mr. Labouchere possesses to the full, that virtue is courage. It was never shown more notably than on the memorable occasion when he and Mr. Robertson met at Boulogne, threw coffee at each other, and were only prevented by the waiters from annihilating one another with the spoons. Perhaps the only parallel to this glorious episode is to be found in that other episode of a brother Editor and kindred spirit, who went down with a big stick to intimidate an office boy, and was thereupon brutally bound over to keep the peace. But there is discretion in valour, and we warn Mr. Labouchere that he is becoming foolhardy. Within the last few weeks he has actually been taking an excursion to a place we cannot name in plain English, and he has described his adventures in a production which he playfully calls his "Christmas Number." The result is before us, and we have perused it with some surprise. In the first place, it is "poetry"!—

> Oh, many are the Poets that are sown
> By Nature: men endowed with highest gifts,
> The vision and the faculty divine;
> Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse.

Now we have long recognised Mr. Labouchere as one of those highly-endowed Beings, and we, as well as the public, are well aware that his accomplishment is not that of verse, nor, for that matter, of grammar. On the present occasion, therefore, he has gone to Grub-street, and got some stray rhymester to translate his thoughts poetically; or, what is even more likely, judging from the style of the composition, he has subsidised one of those gentlemen who "do" the poetry for Mr. Hyam and Messrs. Moses and Son, and at this festive season "work in" local allusions for transpontine pantomimes. But we are less concerned with the manner of this effusion than with its matter. Can we give that matter higher praise than to say, emphatically, that, in its splendid political insight, in its scathing satire, in its terrible truthtelling, but, above all, in its thorough Christian charity, it is worthy of the Editor of *Truth*?

Of course, that Editor is the central figure of the poem. The Dante of the period, he imagines himself guided through seven circles of a social Inferno, named respectively the Political, the Dramatic, the Legal, the Financial, the Fashionable, the Bohemian, and the Literary. We have no space to follow him through his pilgrimage, or to describe the beautiful "comic songs," parodies, and "breakdowns" by which it is diversified. We would merely touch on one or two points which strike us as extremely interesting. Perhaps the finest part of the poem is Canto Fourth, the argument of which is as follows:—"The Editor, escorted by his legal adviser, falls into an ambuscade, and is attacked on all sides by inveterate foes, who are unable, however, to accomplish their designs, and fall back helpless before Mr. George Lewis, jun." Here is a noble passage:—

Protected by the magic shield I leisurely surveyed
The somewhat mix'd antagonists who had the onslaught made,
And then I saw that in the van—the egg-van I may say—
Was "*Whitehall* Jenkins" egging on the others to the fray.
While he himself with Peacock's eggs was striving me to hit—
But he soon found he'd put his foot, nay all his "Legge" in it;
For half the rotten eggs he threw, as on the shield they broke,
Splashed back with strange persistency, and covered him with yolk.
A fur-clad form I also saw, who from his long-bow sent
Barb'd shafts at us, which ever failed our buckler to indent;
Twas not the first time in this dream I'd cause to scorn to laugh
The rage so impotent that filled the *Daily Telegraph*. . . .
Another foe who rushed on me was so beneath contempt,
That even to his presence note I never should have dreamt,
But like that odious animal—I mean the skunk, I think—
His presence he proclaimed by means from which 'twas vain to shrink, &c.

There is no mistaking the inspiration here. The form is that of our old friend, Mr. Slum, who did the poetry for "Jarley's Waxwork," but the spirit is that of Mr. Labouchere. "What a devilish classic thing!" to quote Mr. Slum's own words; "By Gad, it's quite Minervian!" After this, and after the co-operation of such an impeccable spirit as "Mr. George Lewis, jun.," we should fancy Mr. Labouchere's enemies would never have another word to say.

In the Dramatic Circle, our modern Dante positively shines; but we have caught him in one little mistake. As he is about to enter in, he is told by "Miss Kate Vaughan"—

If you have naught *adapted*, do not shrink;
But if you have, beware!

To which he boldly replies:—

I've naught to fear!

Now, really, this equivocation is scarcely worthy of so good a man. Has he so soon forgotten *Patrie*, or the rapid "damnation" of a certain play at the Queen's Theatre and M. Sardou's indignant letter to the *Times?* Surely, he should remember it, for it was a cruel pill to swallow, and caused terrible wry faces. Pray, let him refresh his memory, and correct the ingenuous blunder—in a second edition.

Space fails us, and we cannot do justice to this *magnum opus*. In good truth, moreover, we seem to be treading on dangerous ground. It was not right of Mr. Labouchere to risk his precious person in Limbo; for, though he would doubtless be an acquisition there, and would rapidly rise to distinction anywhere, we cannot spare him yet. We want more reminiscences of the aristocracy, more details about Madame Patti's washing-bill and Prince Bismarck's "dirty hands," more little anecdotes of the bedchamber and the billiard-room, more wicked revelations about "Truthful Tommy's" friends and enemies. It was kind and thoughtful of Mr. Labouchere to anticipate the hopes of so many of his readers, and to go to another and a warmer sphere prematurely; but, thank heaven, he has returned in safety to the bosom of his country. We conjure him not to venture thither a second time; but, if he does so, lest he should happen *not* to return, we would recommend that he should take his Newspaper with him. *Here*, it is regarded with a certain amount of misgiving; *there*, it could not fail to kindle absolute enthusiasm.

THE COUNTRY AND THE SCHOOL BOARD.

The School Board system, which Mr. Forster and his successor at the Education Office, Lord Sandon, termed "a great educational experiment," has scarcely justified by its accredited results the bold predictions of its success made nearly ten years ago, even in the eyes of its most strenuous and sanguine supporters. That it has failed, and utterly failed, as an educational organisation to meet the educational requirements of the humbler classes of society, is a charge of the utmost gravity which ought not to be directed against it without the support of the strongest evidence, and this evidence has not yet seen the light. But the facts before us, and all that is known of the working of Mr. Forster's Education Act and Lord Sandon's supplemental measure, confirm us in the conviction that the School Board system, as hitherto worked in the metropolis and the provinces, has been, to a very considerable and serious extent, a failure, and further, that in giving expression to this opinion we are but giving utterance to the settled conviction of the country at large. It is impossible to overstate the significance and force of the fact that the School Board system, after its long trial, is becoming increasingly unpopular, especially in the country, and the voluntary system increasingly popular. This fact comes to us from unimpeachable testimony, for it is nothing short of the authoritative evidence of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools. From the reports of Mr. Coward, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, we learn that in Lancashire 16,558, out of 19,628 additional places to be provided in his district, have been provided voluntarily. Mr. Barrington Ward, another inspector, reporting of Lincolnshire, writes: "I do not think the Boards are generally popular in my district, either with Churchmen or Dissenters. They may have been favourably looked upon by a considerable party; but, now that the practical question of cost is fully understood, I am sure the Board advocates have in very many cases turned to the opposite side, and I find the voluntary system holding its own in the great majority of parishes." Such is the strain in which the majority of Her Majesty's Inspectors testify to the growing popularity of the voluntary schools, handicapped though they have been, over their formidable rivals, and notwithstanding the occasional triumphs which have been won by the Board schools by the transference of the voluntary schools to the Board, from purely financial inability to compete with the Board schools, supported as they are by the public purse. But this pressure put upon the voluntary schools which have succumbed, has only come to be viewed by the public in the light of an oppression, and has planted the deepest feelings of indignation against School Boards, even where such feelings had no previous existence, and intensified such feelings to exasperation where they did exist. It is urged, and not without reason, that School Boards came into operation on the plea of supplementing the voluntary schools

which they now supplant and absorb, and that they have broken faith with the nation in substituting a policy of extermination and suppression for a policy of extension and supplementary aid in education. It is argued, and unanswerably argued, against the School Board in many quarters, that the primary purpose of the system was a provision for the neglected children of the poorest poor, to secure to every gutter child, as it was boasted, the means of rising from the elementary school to the middle class school, and thence to the university, if he had the requisite force of intellect and character, and that, in the practical fulfilment of this purpose, the School Boards have failed, to the injury of the voluntary schools, by taking away their scholars, and to the exclusion, by high fees, of the very class of the poorest poor who cannot afford a high fee, and for whom especially these schools were designed.

Only the other day, the inhabitants of Chelsea held a public meeting, and deputed a body of gentlemen to the London School Board to protest against the attempt now being made to raise the fees of the Marlborough Board School from a penny to two-pence a week, on the reasonable ground that the circumstances of the children in the immediate neighbourhood of this school were such that, if the fee were raised to two-pence, it would very seriously affect the attendance of the children. In this Chelsea School were 123 boys and seventy-six girls, who formerly attended the Iver-street Ragged School, where they not only paid no fee, but twice a week had meals given them. In such a case we think, with the Deputation, that "it would, indeed, be a hardship to the poor parents of those children who had been removed from the ragged schools to the Board School to pay two-pence each where they had paid nothing before," and had something to eat into the bargain.

The high scale of fees adopted in many Board schools, ranging from 2*d.* to 8*d.*, in comparatively poor neighbourhoods, to the practical exclusion of the poorest poor, as well as the crusade of extermination waged against the voluntary schools, which often have to compete under the most formidable disadvantages, have mainly tended to disenchant the popular mind of the fond and bright illusion it so long entertained in favour of Board schools. But other causes have not been without a marked influence in arraying public opinion against the system and its official working. The ratepayers (and ratepayers, we venture to think, form no inconsiderable portion of the public) have a grievance of their own against the School Boards. They feel they have been deluded by the pledges held out to them by the originators and supporters of the Education Act of 1870, to the effect that the Education rate would at the utmost not exceed 4*d.*, and they have by long and painful experience found that the rate is now becoming a very heavy burden, especially where they tax themselves to support their denominational schools. Nor is this all. Much of the mismanagement of Board schools is the fault, if not the misfortune, of the managers. As Mr. Temple states, in the educational report before us, "members of Board schools are not elected, in too many cases, for any educational reason; they neglect the duty of visiting and superintending schools, and choose their teachers in a haphazard way, which with voluntary committee school managers is usually a labour of love where the school and its teachers receive the help and sympathy without which neither work well." It is of some moment to note that many other school inspectors bear testimony equally favourable to the management of voluntary schools, and equally unfavourable to the management, or, rather, mismanagement of the Board schools. It may be, and we hold a strong opinion that much of the comparative failure of the School Board system of education is directly traceable to, the mismanagement of managers, and it is in the interest of the system, and of education generally, we trust, that an effective remedy for this and other incidental abuses of the system will be found and applied at no distant date. It is with the view to such a remedy we have not shrunk from the exposure of School Board abuses, and from pointing out the unmistakable and growing opposition to the School Board system which has taken full possession of the public mind. We hold no brief either for or against the system, the merits and demerits of which we desire to estimate only from an independent point of view, and wholly and solely in the interest of the community at large. The cry comes to us from all quarters, even from the most strenuous supporters of the Education Act of 1870, that great changes must be effected before that Act can work with more satisfaction to the nation, and with more substantial educational results; and we cannot close our ears to this cry, especially with the facts before us which confirm it and make its appeal irresistible. The character of the changes warranted by the situation we hope to discuss on another occasion.

OLD BOOKS.

Charles Lamb has declared, and we are ready to agree with him, that there are some books which read the better for being dog-eared and the worse for wear. We, for instance, cannot take kindly to a new and handsome edition of Sir Walter Scott—no doubt, because our earliest and most loving remembrance associates him with shabby cloth and sullied leaves, fragrant of stale tobacco, and speaking, indeed, "of the thousand thumbs that had turned them over with delight." These were days before Mudie the Omnipotent had cast forth his shoe over every remote town and hamlet. The quiet country town of our youth, at any rate, knew nothing about Mudie; it was even a little uneasy, as well as proud, of the library it possessed—which was stored in the smoking room of the parish doctor. *Our* parish doctor was not a reading man; he had inherited the library, with the practice, from his predecessor; who, indeed, rumour said, had read a good deal more than was good for him, on account of which he did not lie in a comfortable Christian tomb in the parish churchyard, but was actually, and in accordance with his last wish, buried in his own garden. The story of this strange death and burial was always alluded to in our presence in whispers; but the impression made upon our childish mind was, that mysterious and awful pagan rites had celebrated this interment in unconsecrated ground. In any case, there slept the old parish doctor, under a broken column—in a pleasant spot enough, made beautiful by roses in summer and by evergreens when roses had ceased to blow. And close by, at the foot of the garden that sloped down to it, flowed the river through marshy meadows, now carpeted with golden-kingcups, and now transformed into an inland sea by floods—truly a pleasant and quiet spot, where, no doubt, the old doctor had loved to sit and read, and from which it was, perhaps, natural he should not wish to be wholly banished even by death. But, if too much reading were the cause of the doctor's infidelity, he had not certainly stored the library in the smoking room with anything perilous to the most

delicate orthodoxy. Nevertheless, we must confess to having made "Guy Mannering" an occasion of stumbling—inasmuch, as on a certain Sunday night, being left alone in a country parsonage, all the other members of the family at church, we found that exciting story more efficacious than the evening service in keeping off ghosts and robbers.

Now, the old fashioned Lending Library has become a thing of the past. It is true that inasmuch as, though time moves swiftly, the old world dies slowly, there may still be found in obscure streets, and associated with a dull trade in stationery or Berlin wool, a collection of faded old novels, growing more faded on their shelves, where they wait until some one may come back from the past to borrow them. But, as a rule, these old collections have been scattered by the rude winds of change; and have now settled down on the second-hand book stalls. Here we may recognise our old friends by their well known complexion and fragrance; a certain mellow old age, the result of familiarity with those "thousand delighted thumbs" before alluded to, speaks to their character as cobwebs do to that of old wine, and which no private book, though never so well read, can acquire. But more impressive, surely, than even the thumbmarks of a vanished generation are the quaint criticisms and exclamations of sympathy or disapproval which we so often find pencilled on the margin? We are aware that to write in the margin of a book is by some lovers of reading held to be as criminal an offence as that of defacing historical monuments by writing one's name upon them. We cannot, however, fully acquiesce in this severe judgment. Strasburg Cathedral, ruined Pompeii, the great Pyramid, do not address themselves to any particular man; the individual visitor may claim a right in these great works of the human spirit, in so far as he also is able to lay aside his personality and become simply a human spirit, and nameless for the time being; from the moment that he remembers he is John Smith, and writes himself down as such, he has become a mere vulgar trespasser. But a book addresses itself personally to the individual reader; it is a conversation carried on with him by the author; his remarks may properly perhaps, be held in abeyance; but he is guilty of no impertinent egotism in believing that his opinion is worth having. For our own part, we would scarcely wish that this impulse to attempt spiritual arguments with an author were less common or less apparently irresistible than it is. Valuable editions are generally respected by the worst scribblers, but a well-worn novel or volume of poetry appears to us embellished by these involuntary expressions of strong sympathy thrown upon its pages. Who would banish them? Deep and eager lines drawn against any passage breathing generous sentiments; trembling marks, eloquent as the tear-stains which accompany them, set against a pathetic episode; notes of healthy indignation drawing attention to any baseness of a false hero, or any cynical observation of the author. This running commentary makes us believe in the eternal youth and romantic purity of the human heart;—although, perchance, these silent proofs of warmth of feeling left on the road like fallen flowers might, after a lapse of time, be barely recognised by those from whom they fell. We have found old books in which, with all respect to their authors, by far the most interesting story was told, or rather scribbled, in the margin. The reader will recollect Heine's beautiful anecdote of how he received the "Henry of Ofterdingen" of Novalis from the pale hands of the dying Sophie, the fair sister of the hostess of the little inn at Dauerlich. Well, and we have in our possession a French translation of "Heine's Poems," purchased in that paradise of old books, the Brussels Flower Market; and, after the closing verse of the "*Intermezzo*," one word, "*Hélas*," scribbled in a girlish hand, has brought tears to our eyes when Heine's grief had left them dry.

THE PLEASURES OF HOUSE HUNTING.

Agents.

Of all trials and troubles that we poor mortals are doomed to undergo, house hunting is by no means the smallest. What is meant by house hunting is not merely the seeking for a site or domicile that may suit, but all the various phases of agents' whims, landlords' peculiarities, painters, decorators, upholsterers, and other necessary evils, which, like continued blistering, tend to keep up irritation. A deal of wisdom may be contained in the well-known receipe for hare soup, but it is insufficient in that it fails to describe the best method of catching the animal and the subsequent means to be adopted in order to produce the soup. So it is with a house. First find your house, and then furnish, and live in it, is, doubtless, equally sage advice, but, equally, two difficulties at once present themselves. We will consider the first one, which is the finding, and, to commence the search, presumedly we have recourse to an agent. The general idea is that agents are meant to assist both those desirous of finding and those wishing to dispose. The fallacy of this notion gradually dawns on us after we have inspected ten or twelve "desirable freehold residences," as brought to our notice by these go-betweens. After spending much time and no little money, we begin to wonder whether everyone is as unfortunate as ourselves, whether all bent on the same errand, find the "sheet of ornamental water," a duck pond of an æsthetic "nocturne" colour; the "extensive glasshouses" a few broken lights that seem to convey a sense of shame to the sickly cucumbers to which they afford a shelter; or the "Fine Baronial Hall and extensive deer park," a would-be Union, with a drying ground at the back; and indignantly we exclaim, Why do people allow themselves to be fooled in this way? The answer is plain. The demand is greater than the supply; and, with a few honourable exceptions, house agents care nothing for the trouble and expense their clients may be put to, so long as there is in the dim vista of the future a chance of obtaining a commission. But, to continue—weary and tired of the whole thing, it generally happens that in looking at an "eligible" pig stye we (quite by accident) light on something that with a little improvement may do. On inquiry where full particulars can be obtained, we are directed to Mr. X., and, being now overjoyed at the prospect of a release from our troubles, present ourselves before that worthy in a frame of mind eminently calculated for being imposed upon. This Mr. X. is perfectly aware of, and it is a curious fact that he is always unable to give a decided answer just then, as "a gentleman from the West of England (or elsewhere) is coming to look over the domain." After a little thought, however, "If we will conclude at once, he will see what he can do." There are, of course, certain items to be taken at a valuation which can easily be arranged if we will refer him to *our* agent. In blissful ignorance of the consequences, we do so, and sign a document which Mr. X. is pleased to term a "provisional contract." After a week's delay we receive a letter from *our* agent, informing us that he has settled the valuation, which

amounts to treble what we should have had to pay for entirely new articles, and encloses his bill of costs, a specimen of which may be of advantage:—

"To ——, in account with ——.

To attending and receiving your instructions with regard to valuation of property, and purchase of— ...	£10	10	0
To expenses, railway, &c., &c.	2	7	0
To valuation, settled at £320, at 5 per cent.	16	0	0
To stamps, postage, &c., &c.	0	9	6
A cheque by return is requested."	£29	6	6

Perhaps, we feel inclined to doubt the expediency of paying ten guineas for instructing a man to do that which he professes to get his living by. If so, the result will be an appeal to the law by our whilom friend, who employs a smart solicitor on the chance of our being away and his being able to get judgment signed against us before we can turn round. Failing in his object, he is content to take what he can get, but, as some of his clients are timid women, who would sooner pay anything than go to law, he often manages to extort the whole of his charges. It must be understood that this sort of cheat may be avoided by employing none but the leading men; but, as one has, foolishly, an idea that the higher up the scale the more one will have to pay, it often turns out that we employ the small fry who are not far-seeing enough to avoid killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. Another not unfrequent imposture is as follows:—In the middle of the negotiations. The owner of the house decides not to let or sell, as the case may be (that is, he is *supposed* to decide), and we are informed of his determination by letters from both Mr. X. and *our* agent. A postcript from Mr. X., however, says:—"If you will offer ten or fifteen pounds a year more (or, if we are purchasing, fifty pounds in advance of your offer), I think I can arrange it." Of course, sooner than lose our house, as we imagine would be the case, we fall into the trap, and, if it happened that we were gifted with second sight, it would be extremely gratifying to us to watch the smile of triumph on the faces of Mr. X. and *our* agent, as they drank success to our credulity. Numerous instances of frauds could be cited, but space does not permit. As with registry offices for servants, radical reform is required. In both cases the bad is crowding out the good, and, if people would but show up by name all the black sheep they find, they would be rendering a service to society in general and to *honest* agents in particular.

THE EXAMINER OF PLAYS.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

The cheap winter season, which ended on Saturday last with a performance of "Oberon," has been remarkable for two features of interest which we shall do well to record. One, that it has undoubtedly been the most successful series of Italian operatic representations at cheap prices yet given in this country; the other, that, during the ten weeks the season lasted, Bizet's delightful opera, "Carmen," was performed no less than two-and-twenty times. Plainer proof of the enormous popularity the work has achieved could not be desired; and, indeed, its success, as compared with other modern operas, is second only to that of "Faust." It is a significant fact that the time should have arrived when Italian opera receives from the cheap-paying public enough support to bring considerable gain to an *impresario*. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that the season just concluded would not have brought credit to the traditions of Her Majesty's Opera when at its best. Nor could this be expected. Notwithstanding the excellence of the *ensemble*, and the general satisfaction that the performances have given, there have been shortcomings so serious in the stage management and scenic arrangements, to say nothing of an orchestra and chorus that have been strangely unequal in the execution of their labour, that, even if the season be a cheap one, the reputation of the establishment must assuredly suffer if they are allowed to occur again. It is a healthy sign that the public should be content to dispense with "stars;" but they expect no deficiencies in the details to which we have alluded, and it will be as well not to try their patience in the future.

MUSIC.

Royal Academy of Music.—The orchestral concert given at the St. James's Hall on the 19th instant was not less interesting than its predecessors. As a proof of the constant progress made by the Academy students and the ever-increasing prosperity of the institution, it is satisfactory to find so large a portion of the programme consisting of compositions by the former. In more than one instance they evinced merit of a very decided character, and on the obvious advantages of encouraging the students by such performances of their works we need not insist. Mr. Myles B. Foster's Elegy, in memory of H. J. Cockram, the promising young scholar who went down in the *Princess Alice*, took the form of a solo and chorus, being a musicianly composition and worthy the object for which it was written. A song by E. Ford, "Devotion," proved uninteresting, and was not well sung by Mr. Sidney Tower. But unquestionably the best of the MS. pieces performed was the pianoforte concerto in B minor, by Mr. Harvey Löhr. In the first movement the solo instrument is not sufficiently prominent, and variety is wanting, but the slow movement consists of a charming melody well elaborated and worked out; while the *finale* is extremely brilliant. The young composer, who played the solo part himself, was loudly applauded, and recalled. Another new composition that impressed us favourably was Mr. R. Addison's introduction and last movement from a symphony in G minor. The remainder of the concert consisted of Mendelssohn's "Lauda Sion;" pianoforte solos by Miss Alice Borton and Mr. P. Stranders; a fragment from a horn concerto of Mozart's, admirably played by Mr. C. Catchpole; vocal pieces by Mrs. Mudie Bolingbroke, Miss Kate Brand, and Mr. R. George; the overtures to "Fidelio" and "Ruy Blas," and the "Dead March in Saul." Mr. Walter Macfarren conducted.

FINE ART.

Institute of Painters in Water-Colours.—If the proposed scheme for the establishment of a Royal Academy of Water-Colour Artists does not become an accomplished fact, it will not be for lack of the necessary merit or material. Such an institution would be of the highest value, for the cultivation of the especially English art of aquarelle is of intense national interest. In no other country has the use of the lighter medium in painting taken such deep root, or reached so high a point of perfection. The present Exhibition of the younger Water-Colour Society is far superior to that of its older rival. There is evidently a more vigorous and virile life, as well as a greater freedom and unconventionality, both in choice of subjects and in manner of treatment. Mr. Hubert Herkomer

exhibits two powerful "Studies" (143 and 145), which will be recognised as portraits of his parents, and an unfinished sketch of "A Phrenologist" (273), a likeness evidently of Professor Fowler, who is examining a human skull. The responsive grin with which the professor gazes at the relic of mortality is a sly touch of humour. The same artist's "Siegfried and the Bear" (236) is a fine study of forest, but the figure-painting is confused and unsatisfactory. The latter objection cannot be applied to the works of Mr. C. Green, the cameo-like finish of whose "Tête-à-tête" (21) makes it one of the most attractive pictures on the walls. The silken textures are extremely well rendered, and the embarrassed attitude of the lovers is unobtrusively, though effectively expressed. But, of Mr. Green's six productions, a single figure, "A Gentleman of the Eighteenth Century" (322), painted with singular sobriety and fullness, pleases us the most. Mr. C. J. Staniland's "On the Sands" (33), a picture of a life boat rescue, is remarkable for its legitimate treatment of white and for commendable absence of body-colour. Mr. J. D. Linton has a fine study of a "Fisher Girl" (37), and, amongst others, "A Cup of Tea" (75), admirable in accessories, although marred by undue blackness of shadow. More thoroughly satisfactory is his "Study for a Flag of Truce" (314). Mr. Walter Wilson's "Baiting" (104), a scene from Boulogne fisher-life, is dashing, and full of *brio*, but his central figures are too much posed for effect. Mr. E. Bale sends a capital figure of a girl reading old letters in a Louis Seize room, "Memories" (261), and a subject in the style of the late F. Walker, "An Easter Offering" (154), replete with tenderness and poetry. But his "Woman of Amalfi" (267) will best sustain his well-won reputation. Mr. Augustus Bouvier continues to exhibit his *bon-bon* box-like renderings of classical themes. His "By the Rivers of Babylon" (163) is interesting, as showing how the daughters of the captivity, in all their despair, did not neglect the coquettish and careful arrangement of their *coiffure*. Mr. Towneley Green's (197) "Strolling Players in an Inn-yard" is altogether admirable. The contrast between the plebeian and aristocratic play-goers is shown, without the isolation of the latter, by a clever arrangement of colour, and the balance of the composition is full of harmony. Mr. Seymour Lucas has two excellent drawings of mediæval swash-bucklers, broadly and brilliantly painted; and Mr. Guido Bach's sketches of Eastern and Hungarian life, especially one of a woman with a *yashmak*, are fully up to his customary standard. We wish we could say the same of the works of Messrs. Cattermole, John Absolon, P. F. Poole, R.A., and others of "*la vieille garde*," of which *le talent meurt mais ne se rend jamais*. Herr Josef Israels (308) has another of his familiar fisher-pictures, treated with all his accustomed grandeur. Mr. E. M. Ward, R.A., in "A First-born" (209), shows a pleasant departure from his previous path. Mr. E. J. Gregory runs Mr. Herkomer hard in his forcible studies, as does Mr. Clausen, whose manner now seems to approximate to that of Herr Israels, and now to that of Mr. Herkomer, with an occasional divergence into the domain of Mr. Whistler, as shown in his weird, but ineffective sketches (147 and 148). It is a pity that so capable an artist should not aim at individuality. Mr. H. B. Roberts's Wilkie-like "A Dull Blade" (29) is full of quiet humour, the parent in his picture being, apparently, more successful in sharpening his scissors than in imparting information to his offspring; and his "Plebeian Gentleman" (140), a scene from "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," though somewhat conventional, has many good points. Mr. H. G. Hine shows no falling off in his sketches of Southdown and sea, and Mr. Harry Hine in his liberal contribution of twelve pictures evinces much power. The best of them is his "Fisherman's Refuge," admirable alike in atmosphere and in warmth and solidity of architecture. Land and sea-scape are not so strongly represented as *genre*; but Mr. W. L. Leitch, Mr. Orrock, Mr. E. Hargitt, Mr. J. Fahey, Mr. Whymper, Mr. W. Wyld, and, above all, Mr. Edwin Hayes, distinguish themselves in these departments. The school of Prout receives ample exemplification at the hands of Mr. L. J. Wood, and Mr. Carl Werner's (122) "The Akropolis" is treated with the artist's usual force. Mr. W. Small's "Summer Time" (51) is a happy combination of subject and landscape, and Mr. J. Aumonier has some sketches, in which a few broad touches produce a more marked effect than the minuter manner of some of his competitors. Mr. J. Tenniel sends three originals of his current cartoons in *Punch*, which serve to show how little satisfactorily even the best wood-engraving can render the *nuances* of refined drawing. Flower-painting is represented to absolute perfection by Mrs. Duffield, and the prestige of the lady members is fully sustained by Mrs. W. Oliver and Miss M. L. Gow.

THE EXAMINER'S LETTER BOX.

[*We are not responsible for the opinions expressed in the letters which appear in the Examiner's Letter Box.*]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EXAMINER.

DEAR SIR: A letter in *The Times* of the 26th inst. called attention to the difficulty of obtaining English manufactures in Rome. I can corroborate the writer's statement. There is hardly a shop in any of the large towns in Italy where thoroughly good articles of English make can be obtained. Almost everywhere the buyer is offered inferior Swiss or German productions at absurd prices. Yet there is no doubt that Manchester goods and Sheffield hardware could be sold at Rome and Naples at remunerative prices. We appear to have lost the Italian market, thanks to our inactivity; and we fear we shall now lose Germany as well, for, notwithstanding the opposition of Herr Hobrecht, the Prussian Minister of Finance, Prince Bismarck's Protectionist measures will, probably, be eventually carried. The Chancellor has for the present abandoned the idea of establishing a Government monopoly for the sale of tobacco and cigars, but the duties both on home-grown and imported tobacco will, no doubt, be largely increased. English trade, however, will be more affected by the proposed increase in the Customs duties on cotton, piece goods, woollen goods, and hardware. This measure is avowedly taken in order to protect German manufacturers, who have suffered no less by the results of over-speculation and over-production than our own. As there can hardly be any doubt that this measure will be carried soon after the Parliament re-assembles at Berlin, one more of the few remaining Continental markets will be closed to English manufacturers. That the Government policy will injure the great mass of the German people, by making them pay higher prices for the goods they require in order to keep a few manufacturers from bankruptcy, is, of course, not understood, or not believed by the Protectionist party. It is surely high time that some such scheme as that suggested by *The Times'* correspondent be carried out, or English trade will entirely disappear, and we shall all be

RUINED.

London, Dec. 27th, 1878.

THE LITERARY EXAMINER.

[*In future a certain space will be reserved weekly for articles on the Universities, Colleges, and Educational Subjects generally. Several columns of* "THE LITERARY EXAMINER" *will also be devoted to reviews of Educational and Children's Books, of which a careful selection will be made, since the number published makes it impossible to notice all.*]

A HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

A History of England from the Conclusion of the Great War in 1815. By Spencer Walpole, author of "The Life of the Right Hon. Spencer Percival." In two volumes. Longmans. 1878.

(*First Notice.*)

The author of this work tells us in his preface that his purpose is to write the history of England from the conclusion of the great war which ended in 1815 down to a very recent period. The present instalment of his labours carries the story down to the passing of the Reform Act in 1832. The period which Mr. Walpole has selected is, beyond question, well chosen as a subject for historical study. No other period of English history is of greater importance to the political student, and scarcely any period is less familiar to the average Englishman of the present day. It is too remote from our own times to be within the actual memory of any but a very few of the living generation, while it is also too near to have yet attracted any but a very small share of the critical attention which has been so freely bestowed upon the events of the two preceding centuries. Mr. Walpole anticipates a possible objection which may be made that the times of which he proposes to treat are too recent to allow of judicial treatment. The same objection, he says, might have been raised against some of the greatest historical works which have been given to the world. A hint is here dropped in passing as to the goal which the historian has placed before himself in undertaking his present task. Lord Macaulay, the preface reminds us, in 1848 had hoped to extend the course of his brilliant narrative down to the period of the passing of the Reform Act which is so intimately associated with his own highest oratorical successes. Mr. Walpole, beginning his work in the present year, seems to think that his history may on the precedent of so high an authority legitimately include the events of 1862. The first half of the work now before us carries us from the time when Mr. Walpole says Englishmen enjoyed less real liberty than at any time since the Revolution of 1688 down to the great constitutional change which, in the words of the great Whig authority to whose name we have just alluded, brought the Parliament into harmony with the nation. During the last twelve years of this period no less than five great revolutions in law, in commerce, in foreign policy, in religion, and in internal politics, had effected memorable results in the history of political and social progress. In these two volumes, then, the series of events is traced out which ended with the culminating change effected by the Reform Act. In his future volumes we are promised an account of the work done by the Reformed Parliament, in which the English people was for the first time in its history enabled to make its will known through the voice of its representatives.

The last act of the terrible drama of the great revolutionary struggle which had for four-and-twenty years disturbed the peace of Europe was ended in the summer of 1815, and a long peace succeeded a protracted war. In the first twenty pages of this work we have a succinct and interesting account of the final result of the contest upon the various countries of Europe, which was made apparent as soon as the smoke of battle had cleared away from the field of Waterloo. The changes brought about by the twenty troubled years which had passed away had affected the great states of Europe in a manner which was but trivial compared with the radical alterations wrought in the conditions of the minor countries. The five nations of Europe which had been universally recognised as the five great powers at the commencement of the struggle were the five great powers at its close. France had suffered more and gained more than any of the rest, and yet after 1815 her old boundaries had but been restored, and she was again under the sway of a Bourbon, but a Bourbon controlled to a certain extent by a Parliament elected by the people. Far different, however, was the result of the war upon the minor states. Russia, Austria, and Prussia alike sought for accessions to their territory as rewards for the struggles which they had gone through, and whole nationalities were assigned among the great powers with no regard whatever to the wishes of their people. England alone had not shared in the spoils, but the general effect of the war had been to raise her to the foremost place among the nations of the world. Mr. Walpole devotes his first chapter, after reviewing the general condition of Europe at this period, to a sketch of the general condition of the United Kingdom, and of the relations of England with the rest of the world. The following passage from the concluding portion of this chapter may be quoted not only for its summary of what had been going on at home while England was occupied abroad with war, but also as a not unfavourable specimen of our author's style and method:—"While the thoughts of statesmen were occupied with the changing aspects of a protracted war, Watt was completing his steam engine, Arkwright his water frame, Crompton his mule, Cartwright his power-loom, Davy his safety lamp. Telford was carrying roads through the most impenetrable parts of the country; Murdoch was turning night into day by the invention of gas; Bell was launching the first British steamer, the *Comet*, on the Clyde; Rennie was throwing new and beautiful bridges across the Thames; merchants and manufacturers were alike profiting from the inventions of these great men, and England was proving by her example that a free people could triumph over the greatest difficulties, and prosper in a state of war which apparently made all prosperity hopeless."

There was, of course, as Mr. Walpole reminds us, "a reverse to the medal." While England was gaining these vast national advantages, some of them at a cost of which she had but little conception at the time, her political condition had been almost as steadily deteriorating. Determined, however, to write his history not according to chronological order, but according to the more laborious and, as we believe, far higher plan of treating his subjects as separate episodes, he reserves the question of the political state of England for a future portion of the work.

The second chapter is devoted to a description of the internal condition of England at the time which Mr. Walpole has chosen for the commencement of his subject. The first point to which he directs our attention is the change which travelling has made in the political life of England. It requires no slight effort of imagination to carry back the mind distinctly to the time when a journey from the north of England to London was a far more difficult and hazardous undertaking than a journey from England to New York is at

the present time. In those days the privilege of sending a Member to Parliament was little desired by a constituency, and few wished to act as representatives. At last it became the fashion for country gentlemen to spend a part of the year in London, and the whole question of representation was changed. In the space of little more than a hundred years, which elapsed between the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII. and the end of that of James I. no less than sixty-nine new boroughs were created; but from that time down to the Reform Act of 1832 only two sprang into existence during two centuries. Mr. Walpole here reviews the whole of our Parliamentary Government, with all its evils of bribery, election expenses, pensions, sinecures, the sole advantage that he claims for the old system being the early initiation into political life which it gave to the young men who were destined for the work of statesmanship. The corn laws, the condition of the Church, the miserable condition of the labouring classes, and the work that was done by such reformers as John Howard, Elizabeth Fry, and Jeremy Bentham, are the principal subjects treated in this most interesting chapter, in which we also find a good account of the condition of the army and navy in 1815. A graphic description of the expedition against Algiers concludes this part of the work. The writer considers this episode to be most noteworthy for many reasons, not only as conferring fresh honour upon England, and marking out her decided place as mistress of the sea, but as uniting again the British and Dutch navies, and marking the steady decline of the Mussulman power.

The limits of our space will not allow us to go into the details of Mr. Walpole's work—his review of the political leaders of the time—his notice of the brilliant but disappointing career of Canning—his sketch of Lord Castlereagh, whose oratorical achievements are illustrated by the anecdote that he once succeeded in the feat of concluding a speech with the word "its"—his descriptions of the powerful, but too restless Brougham, of the eloquent and patriotic Grattan, of the philanthropic Romilly, and of the other less prominent characters who then figured on the political stage. Perhaps the most interesting portion of the book is the review of the literary history of the time, which is contained in the fourth chapter. Three features of the age are, in Mr. Walpole's opinion, peculiarly prominent. The first is that the younger generation of authors had thrown off "the panic dread of change" caused by the excesses of the French Revolution, which had so profoundly affected the minds of Burke and Mackintosh, and were beginning again to advocate those advanced opinions which the men of an earlier generation had so suddenly and finally abandoned. The second was the advance in the field of literature made by women, how Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen followed in the steps of Frances Burney, and how both of them seemed almost completely uninfluenced by the fierce political atmosphere which so strongly affected the writings of their male contemporaries in literature. The third and, perhaps, the most striking characteristic of the time was the power and ability of the periodical press, which spread the views of Adam Smith and Bentham through the mass of the community, and attacked with fatal power the established system of Government in the country. Mr. Walpole's fifth chapter is chiefly occupied with a history of the distress under which England suffered at the termination of the great war, the fierce discontent which permeated the country, and the strong repressive measures which were adopted by the Government of the day. His sixth chapter treats of the disgraceful episode of the Queen's trial. One of the most valuable features of this book is the author's habit, when he comes to any subject of peculiar interest, of giving a sketch of its previous history, and thus preparing his reader for a proper appreciation of the bearing of the past upon that immediate condition of things with which the work is directly engaged. This first volume is, in our opinion, a very valuable and impartial contribution to the study of a most important period of English history.

PAUL FABER, SURGEON.

Paul Faber, Surgeon. By George Macdonald, LL.D. 3 Vols. London: Hurst and Blackett.

Mr. Macdonald belongs to the "nocturne" school of novel writers. The word "novel," as applied to any of Mr. Macdonald's writings, is a decided misnomer; a "Book of sermons" would be the more appropriate title, as all his works are really such under an extremely thin guise. He is a tautologist of a very high order indeed. Few authors are able to retain their popularity as he has done, while incessantly reiterating, with painful monotony, the self-same ideas as those which appeared in their first production. Perhaps, the fact of different characters, in different circumstances, giving utterance to Mr. Macdonald's religious profundities may explain this anomaly. "Paul Faber" is even more wearisome than some of its predecessors, all the characters having a strange tendency to preach as only Mr. Macdonald's creations can preach, which is saying much for their long-windedness.

The scene of the novel is the cathedral town of Glaston, the principal surgeon of which—Paul Faber—is the hero. When a student, Paul's fancy had been entangled with a girl on whom an operation was being performed. Although occupying an inferior position in the social scale, she had, under Paul's guidance, acquired the polish and habits of polite society. As time went on, Paul gradually began to cool, and the birth of a little girl brought about a cessation of his visits, cold letters taking their stead. One day, the girl and her baby disappeared, and the story opens with Paul at Glaston, where, notwithstanding his pronounced atheism, he is a popular man. He obtrudes his obnoxious views upon everybody, but his tender sympathies and desire to alleviate the misery of those around him counterbalance the ill opinion which most people had formed of him. Juliet Meredith, the heroine, of whose antecedents nothing is known save by herself, is lying dangerously ill, and Faber saves her life by opening one of his veins and injecting some of his own blood into her. Faber makes love to her, but she keeps him in a state of suspense for some inscrutable reason till well on in the second volume. Meantime Faber uses his influence with Wingfold, the curate, to procure her work as a teacher; but upon it being discovered that Drake, a superannuated Dissenting minister, is in difficulties, the curate wishing to assist him in a delicate way, proposes that Juliet should board with Drake, which is agreed upon. This Drake had been minister of a local chapel, but was compelled to resign through those bickerings so indigenous to small churches. His family consisted of his daughter, Dorothy, and an adopted child, Amanda, whom he had picked up at some sort of *crêche* in Southwark. Drake, after experiencing the sore, strange ways of poverty, suddenly acquires riches, which he at once sets about spending nobly. Soon after this event Juliet returns to her former lodgings, where Faber continues his solicitations, which consist mostly of negative arguments against her religious beliefs. At last, Glaston is surprised by the marriage of the doctor and Miss Meredith. Life was beginning to grow rather monotonous for Mrs. Faber, and, full of this feeling, she

wandered out one day in her husband's absence. In passing the draper's shop, a strange woman came out whose face mysteriously called up the past; a little farther on she met Mrs. Wingfold, who insisted that Juliet should accompany her on a visit to the rector's wife. A storm came on, and Mrs. Faber was forced to remain overnight at the rector's. Next day being Sunday, she forgot Faber's teachings for the nonce, and accompanied the others to an adjoining chapel, where the curate preached a sermon, which, coupled with the mysterious face of the previous day, moved Juliet strangely. On coming home, she "whispered three awful words" into her husband's ear regarding her past life. He instantly casts her from him, and in vain Juliet bares her back and holds up a whip to be punished! She disappears, and the rumour spreads that she has drowned herself; but she was really saved from doing so by Dorothy Drake, who secretes her in Osterfield Park, the new house which Dorothy's father had bought. The day following her disappearance Faber falls from his horse in a mad chase to find her. He gets better, but all his old strength of character and self-confidence have fled. At this juncture he recognises by the peculiar formation of her ear that Amanda Drake is his daughter, and, upon revealing the fact to old Drake, he learns that her mother, the girl whom he had known in his student days, was dead. Gradually it dawns upon Faber that he has been too hard upon his wife, considering his own sinful past. His wife is about to be confined, and, by a stratagem on the part of Dorothy Drake, he is brought to the place where his wife is in hiding. The room is so skilfully darkened that he fails to recognise her, and a second time he saves her life by opening one of his veins. He latterly, and by slow degrees, discovers the truth, and the stereotyped reconcilement takes place.

Such is a brief *résumé* of this most recent work of Mr. Macdonald. It is full of defects that would scarcely be pardonable in a tyro, but it sparkles here and there with genuine power. Mr. Macdonald is too analytical, and talks too much shop, for he evidently cannot forget that he was once a minister. It is preposterous to imagine that living men and women would talk as Mr. Macdonald makes them do in his books. One Polwarth and his niece, Ruth—two supernumerary characters—are very miracles in this respect, talking of heaven liked winged angels. This religious twaddle—for we can call it nothing else—has not a healthy tendency; it develops that effeminacy which apes at being a washed-out likeness of One whose name we reverence too much to mention lightly. We always keep men at arm's length who wear long hair parted in the centre, and who have a far-away, sentimental look on their face. It may be urged that Mr. Macdonald is paradoxical with a view to giving greater emphasis to the truth; but it is possible to have just a little too much paradox. All writers have their idiosyncracies, and Mr. Macdonald has his full share. The irrepressible "solitary horseman" style of G. P. R. James finds a distinct echo in most of Mr. Macdonald's writings. Occasionally, Mr. Macdonald breaks out into melody—save the mark!—and only in two instances with mediocre ability, at page 34, in Vol. II., in the lines beginning "My morning rose in laughter," and in the "Year Song," at page 140, Vol. III. He affects the quaintness of George Herbert with but sorry success. Coleridge once asked Lamb if he had ever heard him preach, and Lamb replied, in his genial, stuttering way, that he had never heard him do anything else. Mr. Macdonald can draw a beautiful moral from this. These three volumes "drag their slow length along" with a wearisome tediousness, enlivened here and there with a sermon *in toto*, as delivered by the curate. It is to be hoped that, next time Mr. Macdonald attempts to entertain the public, it will be in a way worthy of that skill which he undoubtedly possesses.

THE RECORDER OF BIRMINGHAM.

A Memoir of Matthew Davenport Hill, with Selections from his Correspondence. By his Daughters, Rosamond and Florence Davenport Hill. (Macmillan and Co. 1878.)

Amidst the multitudinous glorifications of mediocrity which flood the Press in these latter days, it is pleasant to find an unpretending, intelligent, and affectionate record of an eminently honourable and useful career. The life of Matthew Davenport Hill, the late Recorder of Birmingham, well deserved to be written. For Mr. Hill was not only a remarkable man in many ways, and interesting on the score of personal character alone, but in the course of his long and laborious life he was continually thrown in contact with many illustrious persons, and took an active part in many great movements forming an important element of the story of our country during the last fifty years, but of which the history, for the most part, remains to be written. Of these persons and events the volume before us contains much which must prove interesting to the philosophic student of politics, and many reminiscences with the lighter flavours of literary anecdote which will be eagerly devoured by that omnivorous personage, the general reader. To those, again, who love biography for its own sake, the life that is here recorded will furnish another encouraging illustration of how a man may with comparatively slender means, but with energy, single-mindedness, and devotion to a noble end, achieve great things—not mere personal fame only, but the more solid and enduring gratification of having materially ameliorated the condition of thousands of his fellows.

Mr. Hill was born in 1792, the eldest child of Thomas Wright Hill, a schoolmaster of some reputation in his day, an adherent of Priestley's, and Sarah Lea, a woman of "shrewd intellect, courage, and integrity." To the advocates of hereditary descent of moral and intellectual qualities, it will be interesting to learn that through his paternal grandmother he on the one side could claim kinship with the patriot Hampden, and on the other with the no less illustrious author of "Hudibras." His early education was given chiefly peripatetically by his father, but from the age of twelve he was engaged in assisting his father in a school he had opened near Birmingham in 1803. So that Mr. Hill was really in all essential respects a self-educated man, and he continued all through life to insist upon the fact that the best education a man gets he has to give himself, and that independent intellectual effort is more truly disciplining to the mind than the mechanical absolution of numberless scholastic categories. If Mr. Hill, on the one hand, lacked the grounding of a regular school training, which most men take with them into the battle of life, this loss was more than compensated by the early development of self-reliance and abundant opportunities of intercourse with highly cultivated minds, not a few of whom were numbered amongst his father's friends. And so years passed teaching and learning. In 1813 he began to keep a diary, from which one of the earliest passages is worth quoting, as it strikes what may be called the key-note of his life. He writes (in December, 1814):—"I find a general want of close and vigorous application. I must exert myself to break my habit of late rising. I cannot recollect to have accomplished much, and *I cannot call to mind a single act for the general good of society, I mean any supra duty.* I most earnestly hope I shall have a better account to record at the end of the

ensuing week. Amen." At the age of 22 he found himself a country schoolmaster, his head swarming with schemes for the improvement of mankind. Such a situation sixty years ago could not be congenial to a man of his ambition and abilities. So he determined to strike out for himself, and read for the bar, a resolution in those days undreamt of by a Birmingham man. Of course, friends dissuaded, pointed out the uncertainty of the profession, his want of a connection, and so on; but he was not to be deterred, and managed to eke out his slender income by contributions to various journals, notably the *Morning Herald*. He was called at Lincoln's Inn in 1819, the year of the Peterloo Massacre, and joined the Midland circuit. In the early part of his professional career there was a good deal of enforced leisure which he employed in writing for various journals and magazines, principally on subjects connected with law reform and popular education. He became one of the contributors to *Knight's Quarterly*, where he had Macaulay, Moultrie, and Praed for fellow-workers. The energy with which he was wont to utter his convictions may be gathered from the following reference to "Vivian Grey," in a letter to his wife, written on circuit in 1827 :—

"I have been reading 'Vivian Grey.' It must be written by Theodore Hook. It is very much like 'Sayings and Doings,' the same disgusting heartlessness and cant about principle. I never read a book which gave me so thoroughly the idea that the author was a clever ruffian." Englishmen living under the premiership of Lord Beaconsfield will scarcely be able to repress a smile.

The subject which, in those early years at the Bar, most absorbed his mind was the great question of popular education. In 1822 he published, anonymously, a series of "Essays on Public Education," which gained for him the approval of Bentham, and in 1824 he set forth a prospectus embodying "an outline of a plan for carrying into effect the objects of the Society for Promoting the Science of Education;" but, although his scheme gained the support of several eminent men of the day, the movement ultimately coalesced with two other great educational enterprises of the time—the foundation of the University of London and of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge—of both which institutions he became one of the most zealous supporters. Meanwhile, his professional reputation had increased; he had been employed in several important cases, and during the struggle for Reform became widely known as a Liberal of the Liberals. He sat for Hull in the first reformed Parliament as an advocate of municipal reform, and an opponent of monopolies and taxes on knowledge. Though a Liberal, he was not a Ministerialist, and his votes were given regardless of party, and with a sole regard to what he considered the best interests of the country. At the general election of 1834 he was, however, unseated, and never sat in Parliament again, although repeatedly invited to do so. In 1839 he was appointed Recorder of his native town, which post he continued to fill till 1866; and it was as a judge in the Sessions Court of Birmingham that he delivered those famous charges which made, as Charles Knight said, "Recorder of Birmingham" a household word. His efforts were unceasingly directed towards the amelioration of the condition of the "perishing and dangerous classes." Anyone who knows what the concondition of criminal jurisprudence and prison discipline—even after Howard and Romilly—was in 1839, and what it is in 1878, and who reads in this volume how large a share Mr. Hill had in bringing about the various movements which have resulted in a more rational treatment of the criminal classes, and a humane amendment of the criminal law, will feel that the country owes him a debt of deep gratitude. He was the leading spirit at those Birmingham Conferences of 1851 and 1853 at which it was first sought to gain from the Legislature powers of coercion over criminal children, and the first result of which was "the magna charta of the neglected child," the Youthful Offenders' Act of 1848—and the last points of whose programme were only fulfilled the other day, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, by the Elementary Education Act of 1876. The principles which guided him in his judicial career, and which he laid down in his charges in successive years to the Grand Juries of Birmingham, he printed in 1857, and the work remains the fullest repertory in English on the important subject of which it treats—addressed alike to the jurist and the statesman—the text-book equally for the criminal administrator and the student of social science.

Mr. Hill's experience as a criminal judge made him during the last twenty years of his life an active supporter of the temperance cause, and it is interesting to know that the preamble of the tentative measure known as the Permissive Bill was drawn up by his pen. To the last hour of his life, after he had resigned the Recordership and the Commissionership in Bankruptcy, he continued to devote his well-earned leisure to the advancement of those great causes which had ever been his work and object. He was about to attend the second International Prisons Congress, when, after a short illness, he passed peacefully to his rest. His descendants may have the satisfaction of knowing that, if there were men of his time whose names have more loudly filled the trumpet of fame, there have been none whose labours more fully deserved the gratitude of his countrymen, and, in future, when, perchance, some more dazzling reputations have become mere names, the great measures inspired by his wisdom, energy, and humanity, will continue working for good from generation to generation.

ETNA.

Etna: a History of the Mountain and its Eruptions. By G. F. Rodwell, Science Master at Marlborough College. (C. Kegan Paul and Co.)

We learn from Mr. Rodwell's preface that he was induced to write this work by finding, when preparing an article for the "Encyclopedia Britannica," "that no single work on Etna exists in the English language." We can congratulate him upon the way in which he has supplied this want, for, by compilation from numerous sources, he has produced a readable and interesting book, containing quite sufficient scientific detail to form a valuable addition to the literature of volcanos.

Having visited Etna in 1875, he has made himself sufficiently acquainted with the main features of the mountain to enable him to weave together the best information from the various authors who have written on the subject, and thus to place before the reader a graphic sketch both of the history and physical features of the volcano. Thus, the estimate of Professor Jukes, that, "if we were to put Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales, on the top of Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Scotland, and Carrantuohill, the highest in Ireland, on the summit of both, we should make a mountain but a very little higher than Etna," presents us at once with a mental picture of the grandeur of the mountain, while the fact that the population upon the slopes of the volcano itself amounts to 1,424 per square mile, making, in an area rather larger than Bedfordshire (462 square miles), a population more

than double that of our English county, enables the reader to realise the wonderful fertility of volcanic regions, and the compensations they offer to those who brave their terrors.

At the time of Mr. Rodwell's own ascent the volcano was not in eruption, and he is only able to remark upon the shape and depth of the interior of the crater and the deposits of decomposed lava acted upon by the issuing gases. On the other hand, he was fortunate enough to witness the projection of the triangular shadow of the mountain across the mist on the island, at the rising of the sun. This optical phenomenon is interesting from its comparative rarity. "The shadow appeared vertically suspended in space at or beyond Palermo, and resting on a slightly misty atmosphere; it gradually sank until it reached the surface of the island, and as the sun rose it approached nearer and nearer to the base of the mountain. In a short time, the flood of light destroyed the first effects of light and shadow. The mountains of Calabria and the west coast of Italy approached very close, and Strombole and the Lipari Islands almost under our feet." The eruptions of Etna which are given *seriatim* do not possess any very great interest, as there is much similarity in their character. Of the 78 which have occurred in 2,374 years (from 500 B.C. to A.D. 1874), only nineteen have been of extreme violence, but some of these have been terribly destructive, especially those of 1169 and 1669, in the first of which the entire town of Catania was destroyed and 15,000 persons buried in its ruins; and the same town only escaped on the latter occasion by the exertion of a gentleman of Catania, Signor Pappalardo, who caused an opening in the lava-flow to be effected by crowbars, and thus diverted its course.

The main facts of the geology and mineralogy of Etna and its neigbourhood are given by Mr. Rodwell, the mineralogy being rendered especially interesting by an examination of the lavas made by Mr. Rutley, of the Geological Survey. Mr. Rodwell is, perhaps, wise not to enter too fully into the vexed question of "craters of elevation" and "craters of eruption;" but, since he has alluded to these theories, the reader may be somewhat perplexed at the equal value he seems to attach to both. In point of fact, the "elevation crater" theory has been practically abandoned by all geologists who have visited Etna and Vesuvius, and von Waltershausen, the first of all authorities with regard to Etna, simply dismisses it in a few words as having been "formerly upheld." The dissimilarity in the various sections exposed in the valleys of Etna, the unconformability of the lavas and tuffs in one and the same ravine, the horizontality of the lava beds in the great precipice at the head of the Val del Bove, and the enclosure of the minor cone of Trifoglietto by the eruptions from the main vent of Mongibello, all render this theory untenable. When Von Buch first propounded it most of these facts were not yet ascertained, and, since they were clearly set forth by Lyell, "elevation craters" have ceased to be heard of, except in France, where they survived as an official dogma to which candidates for appointments in the Ecole des Mines were obliged to subscribe.

Among the anecdotes with which Mr. Rodwell has here and there enlivened the more serious matter, Brydone's account of Recupero's scruples, when he calculated that Etna must be at least 14,000 years old, is well worth repeating. "Recupero tells me," writes Brydone (1776) "that he is exceedingly embarrassed by these discoveries in writing the history of the mountain; that Moses hangs like a dead weight upon him, and blunts all his zeal for enquiry; for that really he has not the conscience to make his mountain so young as that prophet makes the world." We are sorry to find that Canon Recupero lost his Church preferment on the publication of Brydone's book, especially as his estimate was, after all, far within the truth.

The illustrations and maps in this volume are not its least valuable part, and it would be well if the author in a future edition would give references to them in the text. Thus, the general map of Etna does not extend far enough to the south to comprise Catania, and it would be a help to the reader, when that town is mentioned, to find a reference telling him that it is included in the geological map of the mountain given near the end of the book.

CALEB BOOTH'S CLERK.

Caleb Booth's Clerk. By Mrs. G. Linnæus Banks. Hurst and Blackett.

It is a little difficult to see what object Mrs. Banks proposed to herself in writing this work. The incidents are stale, the conversation is flat, and the plot is conventional. So far as we remember, no new truth is advanced, and no old truth is made more striking from the first page of "Caleb Booth's Clerk" to the last. Yet the story is not absolutely without merit. Such interest as Mrs. Banks contrives to excite in the fortunes of her characters is not violently interrupted during the progress of the narrative. The artistic power required to conceal or remove what may be called the seams of her work she is entitled to claim, and, in comparison with many specimens of contemporary fiction, her language is pure and her conceptions harmless. That, however, is quite as much praise as we can conscientiously give her. An ignorant and brutal manufacturer, a knavish clerk, a dreamy entomologist, a scheming woman, two pious thieves, a lively if somewhat vulgar young lady, and a lovesick curate, collectively form a material from which genius itself would find it hard to construct an attractive tale. Mrs. Banks herself is not quite contented with it, for she has added to the list a character which is certainly not common-place, but which is not not entitled to any other than this negative merit. Thomas Marsden, so far as se can understand him, is a young gentleman who persuades his family that he is a paralytic cripple, and spends his days crouching over the fire, while in reality he is nothing of the sort, and spends his nights in low debauchery. To his deceived relatives, however, there is one exception in his sister Sophia, who uses her knowledge of his proceedings to her own and her other brother's advantages. Mr. Thomas Marsden also indulges the habit of cracking his knuckles in season and out of season, even more persistently and with even less apparent meaning than Mr. Carker, in "Dombey and Son," shows his teeth. If this pleasing relation between brother and sister be, indeed, what the newspapers call "one of the more unlovely features of middle-class life," we suppose Mrs. Banks is justified in bringing it under the notice of her readers. But if, as we cannot but hope, it is the offspring of her own imagination, its artistic merits are, in our opinion, scarcely sufficient to compensate for its disgusting offensiveness. Nor can we commend the manner in which Mrs. Banks has treated the story of Nelly Scholes, Mr. Thomas Marsden's principal victim. The common consent of mankind, which it is now too late to question, deprecates insistance upon the merely animal part of human nature quite as strongly as it ridicules any attempt to ignore the fact that such a part exists. "Caleb Booth's Clerk" would, in our opinion, have gained something and lost nothing by the omission of the midnight encounters of Nelly Scholes and Thomas Marsden, and we remark upon

this point with the greater readiness because Mrs. Banks's book is, upon the whole, free from this particular fault. Of horrors, however, there is abundance. The work ends as it begins, with a frightful catastrophe, which in neither case is the result of pure accident, while two attempts to poison, the one ending in success, the other in failure, enliven the body of the story. On the second page of the first volume we read this agreeably reassuring paragraph:—

> There was no faint resinous odour in the house to indicate the presence of a coffin, nor did a newly-shrouded corpse fill any sheeted chamber with awe and mystery.

But let not the cheerful reader be too sanguine. For the next paragraph is as follows:—

> Yet, on the floor over the head of the placid seamstress, Mrs. Booth, watched by tearful eyes, lay in a state of coma, on the border land of eternity, while a disfigured form, that of her brother, occupied a dingy waste room in a distant factory, and awaited a coroner's inquest.

This pleasing preface is a fit introduction to a tale in which suspicions and mysteries, and disappearances and coincidences, and lying and fraud and murder, and even cannibalism play their respective parts, and throughout the whole course of which we never escape into the open air of wholesome every day life. If Mrs. Banks writes with a view to being one day put upon a transpontine stage, we frankly admit that she knows her own business best, and have no more to say on the melodramatic nature of her work. But, if she writes for the English public, we venture to suggest that extravagance, eccentricity, and violence, are not infallible tokens of literary genius, and that a single speech of Mrs. Norris or Miss Bates or Dolly Winthrop or Mrs. Poyser is worth all the midnight horrors and all the dark suspicions to be found on the outside of butter or the inside of trunks. Besides, if Mrs. Banks insists on first creating villains and then dooming them to dark and terrible ends, such as thrill the schoolgirl's soul and faintly excite the jaded palate of the professional novel reader, she might as well do it earlier. Why should we be alternately bored and disgusted by such a precious couple as Mr. Marsden and his eldest son through three happily mortal volumes, when they might just as well have been consumed in their own mill, and offered up as a very unsavoury holocaust to female vengeance at the end of the first chapter? It may be that Mrs. Banks was afflicted with a reminiscence of the catastrophe in Masston, but the desire to imitate the weakest part of a clever book is not a sufficient excuse for inflicting upon a long-suffering public the thoughts and acts and whims and megrims of two dismal scoundrels.

A certain facility in writing Mrs. Banks undoubtedly has, but this facility is partly due to an entire want of hesitation in the words or phrases which she employs. Thus, she tells us that "the surgeon pondered in great *dubiosity* one or two questions," introducing us to a new word whose superiority to "doubt" we fail to see. Nor is it apparent why "*unwitting* the drugs with which she was dealing" should be substituted for "not knowing," though, perhaps, it is finer, and, if it is not English, Mrs. Banks's readers are not likely to care for that. But, when the Doctor "argued with himself," "I don't see how I could have *done any other* than give that certificate," we can only conclude that he wished to emphasize the fact that he was not arguing with anybody else. The "placid Emma," too, rather surprises us when she says, "If I was cold and grey as a rock, I was what I had been made." Some rocks are, no doubt, grey as well as cold, but that greyness was characteristic of a young woman with blunted feelings, or dulled emotions, or whatever the proper name of the complaint may be, we were certainly not aware. We puzzled ourselves for some time in conjecturing what an "unpietic oath" might be, for that Mrs. Banks could have invented so ludicrous a compound merely to avoid using the word "impious" seemed incredible. But we were forced to give it up, and must leave the solution to our readers, confessing at the same time our equal inability to explain the meaning of a "pulseless whisper." As for "their *mutual* friends," and "one of the libellous handbills *were* produced," they are blunders of which every schoolboy ought to be ashamed.

Mrs. Banks is not, we think, particularly happy in her attempts at humour. "I've no faith in medicine," says Miss Sophy Marsden, the lively person of the story; "I see so much of the stuff at home. If our house were to sink in the ground, and a duck-pond take its place, there could not be more quack, quack, quackery than at present." It is a strong thing to say that we have never met with a worse pun than this, but we certainly do not remember one. Such as it is, however, it is a fair specimen of Miss Marsden's wit, and consequently of all the wit contained within the covers of "Caleb Booth's Clerk." Coarseness, however, is sometimes employed as a substitute for humour, as in the following description of a girl: "It was our old acquaintance, Nelly Scholes, but on the fourth finger of her left hand was a wedding ring, as, judging from appearances, there had need to be."

Mrs. Banks would do well in any future publication not to meddle with the law without taking advice. No will can enable a boy to dispose of property at the age of nineteen, nor would even a coroner's jury return "a verdict of 'incendiarism' against a woman answering to the name of Poll."

It is not our business to criticise books from a theological point of view, still less to enter into controversy on the respective merits of Churchmen and Dissenters. But it seems an artistic blemish of rather an absurd kind to make nonconformity the one quality, except knavery, common to all the knaves in a story, and there can be no doubt that, even though he was a schismatic, Mrs. Banks should have made up her mind, once for all, whether the christian name of Mr. Hindley, the swindling draper, was Job or Luke. Those who like the old style of impossible escapes from unaccountable shipwrecks, and ghastly adventures among imaginary savages, will relish the career of Frederic Marsden, the good young man of the story. Perhaps, every one who reads "Caleb Booth's Clerk" through will be glad to escape from the society of the ruffians and knaves of Leigh, if it be only to find stale repetition of Mayne Reid and futile imitation of Marryat.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Will is the Cause of Woe. By the author of "Altogether Wrong," "Dacia Singleton," "What Money Can't Do," &c. Three vols. (London: Samuel Tinsley and Co.)—It will be noticed that the author of this novel is not a novice, but that he has already published more than three previous works of fiction. With none of his productions, except that before us, have we the slightest acquaintance. But that doesn't matter; it is enough for us; and, before directing further attention to it, we beg to inform the impatient reader that nothing short of a strong conviction that a more or less careful study of this novel might be made to yield results beneficial to the reading public at large could have induced us to work our way gallantly and persistently through the 1,111 pages it covers. A great living writer has more than once remarked that it would be a very desirable thing if we could lay our hands on the greatest fool in creation; and, in like manner, we think it may be useful, once in a way, to examine a literary work that makes so near an approach to

utter inanity and worthlessness as this "Will is the Cause of Woe." In the first place, the work is very well printed on very good paper, and it is also tastefully and substantially bound. It will compare favourably in these respects with the best publications of its kind either at home or abroad; but, having said this much, our praise of it must end. Perhaps, however, a little more might be said in its favour. It is not a wicked, immoral, or mendacious book—no, not at all. But neither is it a good, moral, or truthful one. It is simply silly, futile, and nonsensical. Its writer has got no conception of what constitutes a sentence, and either does not know the meaning of the simplest words in the English language, or, if he does, he frequently —*i.e.*, nearly always—misapplies them. If he has really written four novels that have been printed and published, we must suppose that there is a section of the community who can read through his books without being paid for doing so. Even on the assumption that the work before us and its predecessors have been published with money of the author's own, it would probably still be necessary to suppose that they find readers to appreciate them. At all events, their author has met with publishers and printers who have been willing to affix their names to this latest production. To begin with, we shall quote a few examples of what the writer of "Will is the Cause of Woe" presents to his readers as sentences, taking all our quotations for this purpose from the opening chapter of the first volume. These extracts will also illustrate what we have said regarding their author's misapprehension of the meaning of some of the shortest words in the English language. For instance, the third sentence runs as follows:—"Great rocks projecting into the sea, and bold precipitous cliffs almost overhanging the house, the roaring waters, the huge black waves, breaking into a sea of silver over the shingly beach and amidst the boulders, rendering it very grand but very terrific." That is the complete sentence—as it stands. Two pages further on we read:—"In the distance, the roar of the murderous waves dashing in wild fury against the giant rocks made the young girl's cheeks to pale, accustomed *as* she was to tempestuous, boisterous weather." By the "as" we have italicised the writer evidently means "though;" and the expression, "made the girl's cheeks *to* pale," is, perhaps, a pardonable inelegancy. Again, a page or two farther on, we hear of "a group, that might have consisted of some eight or ten people, or it might be only a heap of something—perhaps a boat drawn far out of the water and stood upright against some mass of stone." Perhaps, by the word "stood" the writer means "propped;" but the confusion of tense here would be inexcusable in the version of a boy who had had six months' instruction in grammar in an elementary school. Passing over a fearful piece of padding about a churchyard which occurs on the next page, the hero is shortly introduced to us, and spoken of as a "lifeless man" recovered from shipwreck; but the "lifeless man" is soon brought round to life again by the industrious rubbing of his limbs and repeated applications of brandy to his lips. It is curious that, towards the close of the third volume, we again read of "the lifeless form" of the heroine, who, however, also eventually recovers from her accident, and lives healthily and happily for a long time after. Blunders like these, if they escaped the eye of the publisher, might, one would think, in these days of public schools, be detected and amended by the printer's devil. Of other grammatical blunders, such as pronouns with no nouns before them, or behind them, or any where near them, with which the work abounds, we cannot take any notice. As regards the story and the characters, it is full of inconsistencies and improbabilities, and the less said about it the better.

Dress. By Mrs. Oliphant. (Macmillan and Co.)—At first sight, it is difficult to make up one's mind what Mrs. Oliphant's book is intended to convey, or to what section of the public she has addressed herself. But, after a little, the conviction forces itself upon us that it is a declaration of war against men and their costumes, cleverly masked by allusions to feminine attire. Skilful in the art of finding fault, and relying on historical records to second her efforts, she carries her point, and man must fain submit and cry *peccavi*. But, when she takes upon herself the task of pointing out what should be done, Mrs. Oliphant falls into the mistake that has lately been made by so many of our statesmen in considering verbiage equal to sound advice; for instance, fifteen pages—a whole chapter!—headed, "What is to be done?" may be briefly summed up in two words: use scissors. The conclusion and appendix are, so far as they go, excellent. The absurdities of tightly-tied-back dresses and long trains are well shown both by words and illustrations; yet we think Mrs. Oliphant is capable of better things. If we are to have a book on dress, especially artistic dress, let it be one that will teach a lesson, something that appeals to common sense, with practical suggestions for improvements. The fact that men and women in the days of Queen Bess made themselves fit objects for scarecrows, hardly points a moral to the world as it is in the nineteenth century. It falls as far short in this respect as did a wonderful production called, "How to dress on 15*l.* a year," which was written by a lady who never spent less than 200*l.* on her own personal adornment, and whose 15*l.* theories existed solely in imagination. No doubt, what Mrs. Oliphant has written is a step in the right direction. All her ideas are good, and her similes well chosen. We complain that it is not enough. By not enough we do not mean that there is not a sufficient number of words and pages, but that there is no clear definite line given, to teach ignorant people how to avoid the mistakes they are so liable to commit. Were this done, "Dress" would take a high place among the "series of art at home," and would be hailed as a boon by many. We hope Mrs. Oliphant will supplement her very excellent book by supplying the deficiencies we have endeavoured to point out.

The Mountain Mystery: an Apocalypse proclaiming openly the Deep Secret of the Universe, which is also the Hidden Wisdom of Prophecy and Mythology, the central Truth of Philosophy, the Key of Nature, History, and Science, the Basis of Morals, and the final cause of all Religions, in its practical relation to the Great Social Revolution now impending over the Nations of the World, as predicted by Men of Wisdom from Early Times. By H. R. S. Dalton, B.A. (Remington, 1878.)—Leibnitz once said that, if he had the choice given him between Truth and the search after it, he would, in all humbleness, choose the latter. We are doubtful as to the general question, but would certainly prefer continuing our search after truth to attempting to discover it by wading through the two hundred pages of slipshod verse which fill Mr. Dalton's production. The title page, which we have given fully, will be sufficient to indicate to our readers the character of the book.

Jonah, with Notes and Introduction. By Ven. T. T. Perowne, D.D. (Cambridge University Press, 1878.)—This is another volume of the "Cambridge Bible for Schools," and contains all the information needed for an understanding of the text of the book. With regard to its position in the Old Testament

Canon and date of authorship, the Archdeacon, as might be expected, is strictly orthodox, and identifies the author with the Jonah of 2 Kings, xiv. 25. He is thus obliged to swallow the whale and to reject the evidence of the late origin afforded by the Aramaic forms of i. 5, ii. 1, iii. 7, &c., if, indeed, he is aware of the facts and their importance for the criticism of the book. The editor has made a wise use of Kalisch's "Encyclopædic Commentary," and his notes are always clear and to the point.

Bible Echoes in Ancient Classics, by C. J. Ramage, LL.D. (A. and C. Black. 1878).—Mr. Ramage, who has earned the gratitude of journalists and orators whose classical education has been neglected by excerpting the "Beautiful Thoughts from Latin and Greek Authors," has found that the materials he has there collected serve to illustrate the Bible, and has accordingly rearranged them in the order of the texts which have any similarity with them. We are far from asserting that a critical treatment of real parallelisms of thought between the Bible and classical literature would not be both interesting and instructive. But we cannot consider the work before us to have done anything more than supply some materials towards such a critical treatment. In many instances the coincidence is merely verbal; in others, again, the classical text is a commentary rather than a parallelism, and in the larger majority of cases the illustration merely serves to show that there was a good deal of human nature in the Greeks and Romans. We specially object to his treating passages applied to Zeus and Jupiter as identical with texts about the Divine Spirit in the Bible; the God of Aristotle and of Isaiah appeal to quite different parts of man's nature. Again, we cannot see how any independent testimony or illustration is afforded by Josephus, who knew the Old Testament as well as Mr. Ramage, or by Eusebius and Justinian, who were acquainted with both parts of the Bible. While we are thus compelled to deny any critical value to Mr. Ramage's book, we must allow that he has produced a very interesting work for the ordinary reader, and an instructive one for those who know what to look for in it.

Mr. J. T. Bunce, in his *Fairy Tales, Their Origin and Meaning* (Macmillan, 1878), has had a great opportunity and missed it. After the researches of Grimm, Müller, Cox, Gubernatis, and Ralston, the time has just arrived for some popular account of the long travels of fairy tales. But such an account must be masterly in its conception, by which we mean orderly in its arrangement, and exhaustive in its range. We may refer Mr. Bunce to Clodd's *Childhood of the World* for an example. His own book is simply a disconnected collection of elegant extracts from Müller, Ralston, and Campbell, told, it is true, in simple and pleasing style, but wanting in that mastery which might have made the book instructive as well as pleasing. We do not so much object to the author's reduction of all the meaning of fairy tales to the sun and moon myth: we ourselves are more inclined to attribute their similarity to the common human nature of their authors, and we are glad to see that Mr. Ralston takes that view in his excellent paper on "Beauty and the Beast" in the *Nineteenth Century*. But, if Mr. Bunce errs here, he errs in such distinguished company as Professor Max Müller. Still, even from this point of view, more might be made of the national colouring of the tales according as they originate in India or Greece, Scandinavia or England. After making our Aryan ancestry the keynote of his book, it is disappointing to find Mr. Bunce referring to the rich soil of Arabic tales without mentioning that these are derived from Semitic mythology. He has produced a book which may please children, but has lost an excellent chance of giving us a work which might have instructed both them and their parents.

STRAY LEAVES.

In the notice last week of Fine Art etching, through an error, Mr. Seymour Haden's name was printed Hayden, for which we must tender an apology.

The *World* of the 25th condemns in no measured terms the "parvenu insolence" of the *Whitehall Review* anent the death of the late Princess Alice, and we feel sure only echoes the feelings of all who lay claim to the title of Gentleman. There is a vast difference between "irresponsible frivolity" and responsible vulgarity, which the *Whitehall* seemingly has yet to learn.

A tiny edition of Dante's "Divine Comedy" has just appeared at Milan. It is in 128mo, and only about one quarter of the size of the miniature Dante published by Pickering in 1823. It contains 500 clearly printed pages, averaging about thirty lines each, and has been revised by Fraticelli. The number of copies printed is limited to one thousand.

Professor Langer, an eminent Austrian surgeon and anatomist, is busy writing a guide-book for dressmakers and tailors, which will contain a short and popular history of fashions. The learned author points out in what respect the human body is injured or otherwise affected by various modes of dress, and will attempt to show how good taste can be reconciled with comfortable garments fulfilling the requirements of nature. Professor Langer is reported to be particularly inimical to "tied back" dresses and high heels.

Erehwon, by Samuel Butler, has been translated into German, and has just been published by J. A. Barth, of Leipzig. The book is likely to have a most favourable reception, for the notices which have already appeared do full justice to the humorous irony and thoughtful paradoxes of the author.

The plan of establishing a great Catholic newspaper in Rome, to be published simultaneously in five different languages, has, for the present, been postponed.

At Bayard Taylor's funeral last week a large number of German *literati* assembled. The Emperor sent his aide-de-camp to represent him, and the Crown Prince also appeared by proxy, while Her von Bülow attended personally. The fertile novelist Auerbach, who had known the deceased intimately, made a touching funeral oration.

The theatre at Monte Carlo (Monaco), which will be opened to the public on the 10th January, is reported to be M. Garnier's finest work. Seldom has an architect such an opportunity for the display of his talents as here, for the gambling tables still afford such ample profits as to leave a large margin for new buildings. The ceiling is said to be particularly successful; it is being painted by MM. Boulanger, Lix, and Clairin. The curtain, which opens right and left, has been woven at Lyons, of silk and gold; its cost will exceed 800*l*. Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt is expected to grace the first performance in the new house.

The celebrated Russian painter Verestchaguine, chiefly known in this country for his specialty in Central Asian sketches, has left Paris for the Shipka Pass to paint a series of scenes illustrating its memorable defence by General Radetsky.

We have received the following which we recommend to Mesostich Editors :—

Pleez insert this.

A Leson for Hard Ti·mz.—A le·der in the *Ti·ms* ov the 20th Desember sez—"Thrift iz a kwoliti in which the In·glish pe·pel iz no·to·riusli defishent. If Bo·rd Sku·lz kan be· ma·d the chanelz for edu'ka·ting that neglekted fakulti, *tha· wil pa· tha·r kost a hundred ti·mz o·ver.*" We· ar rekwested tu· ad that if so· much ti·m wer not wa·sted in tri·ing tu· te'ch our absurd no·sistem ov speling, tha·r wŭd be· plenti ov ti·m for te·ching thrift and meni uther gŭd thingz az wel.

—o—

We extract the following advertisement from a Bavarian paper :—"Wanted an orator, capable of making a fine speech on the occasion of the return home of a successful artist. It is indispensable that the orator should be of distinguished appearance and in a superior social position." Could there be anything better timed? Parliament is not sitting, and there is nothing particular to agitate about here, while post cards can be procured for 1½*d.* in Bavaria. We have, therefore, but little doubt that the Court journal of advanced Radicalism will shortly announce the departure of the ex-Premier for South Germany to take up the post to which he will have been appointed.

—o—

A correspondent has written to *The Times* to point out that the glass slippers worn by Cinderella were *pantoufles de vair*, and that the latter word has been made into *verre*, owing to the similarity of the sound. Now, "Vair" is an heraldic fur, and formed by heralds of alternate small shields of argent and azure. Thus, for instance, the arms of the Tichborne family are "Vair, a chief, or." Thus, then, the correspondent may be correct, though he is contradicted by another writer in the *Telegraph*. Leaving, moreover, these gentlemen to settle the matter as they please, it may be pointed out that it is hopeless to expect to be able to alter the legend as it exists in nurseries. Cinderella has worn glass slippers ever since children first mourned over her woes when she was left behind, on the occasion of the famous ball, at which she afterwards appeared so triumphantly, and for them she will wear glass slippers till nurseries are no more.

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London, December 23rd, 1878.

FIRST M.B. PRELIMINARY SCIENTIFIC, 1879.—UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.—CLASSES in NATURAL PHILOSOPHY by PHILIP MAGNUS, B.Sc., B.A., in CHEMISTRY by Dr. DUPRE, F.R.S., and in ZOOLOGY and BOTANY, will commence early in January at WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL, MEDICAL SCHOOL, BROAD SANCTUARY.—For particulars apply to W. H. ALLCHIN, Dean.

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12 Tea do.	0	12	0	0	18	0	1	2	0	1	10	0
2 Salt do.	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	4	0	0	4	0
1 Mustard do.	0	1	0	0	1	6	0	2	0	0	2	0
6 Egg do.	0	9	0	0	12	0	0	11	0	0	12	0
1 Gravy do.	0	6	0	0	7	6	0	9	6	0	10	6
1 Soup Ladle	0	9	6	0	13	0	0	15	0	0	16	6
1 Fish Knife	0	11	0	0	13	0	0	15	6	0	16	6
1 Butter Knife	0	2	6	0	3	6	0	5	0	0	5	0
2 Sauce Ladles	0	5	6	0	7	0	0	8	0	0	9	0
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